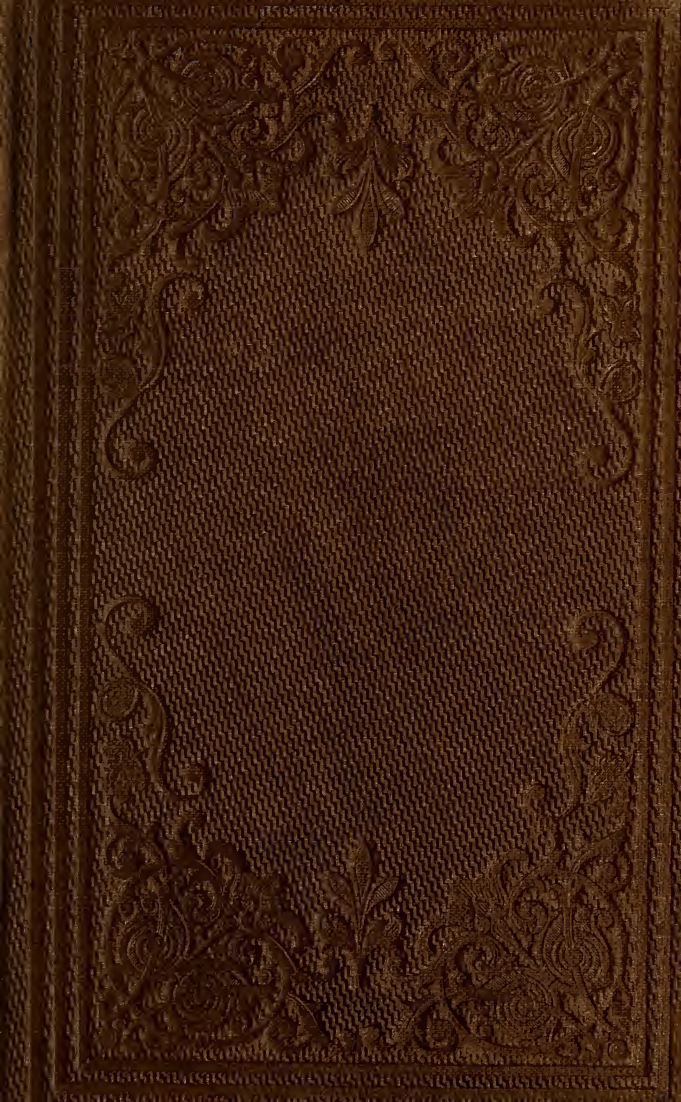




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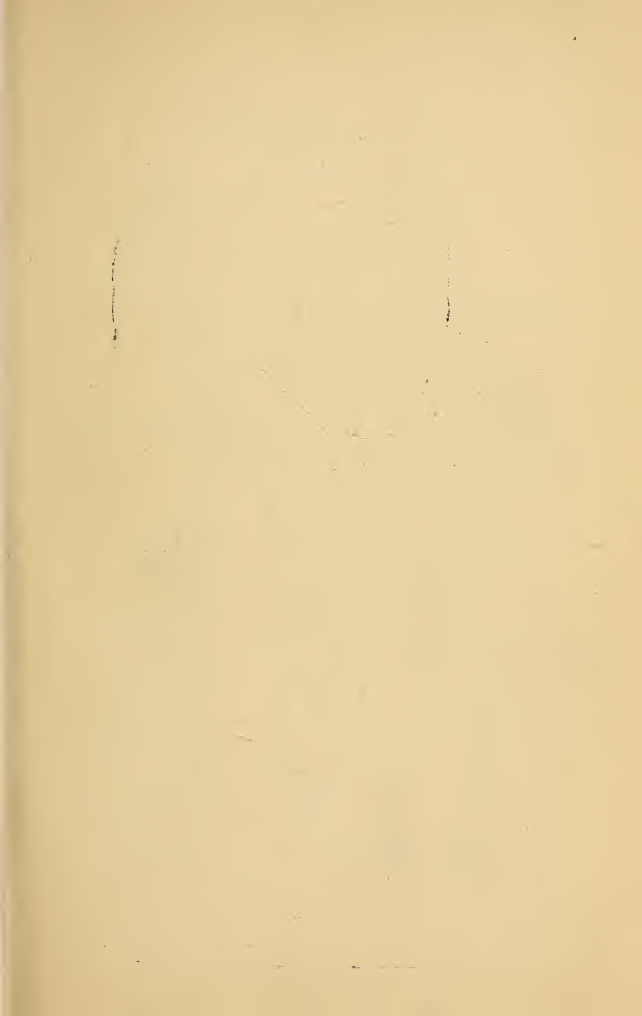
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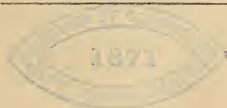




THE
BOY'S BOOK
OF
MORALS AND MANNERS.

✓
BY WILLIAM SIMONDS,
AUTHOR OF "BOY'S OWN GUIDE," "THE AIMWELL STORIES," ETC.

Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and
approved by the Committee of Publication.



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P R E F A C E .

THE substance of this little book originally appeared in the "*Well-Spring*," in the form of a series of articles entitled "UNCLE WILLIAM'S LETTERS TO THE BOYS." It having been thought that these articles might prove useful, if collected into a volume, the author has revised them, and re-cast them into their present shape. It will be observed that the topics all have a practical bearing, and cover pretty much the whole ground usually included in the departments of MORALS AND MANNERS.

Winchester, Mass.

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THE

Boy's Book of Morals and Manners.

I.

A FEW WORDS TO BEGIN WITH.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS :— I am about to offer you a few plain counsels, suited to your age and condition. I mean they shall be kind words, and I do not want you to think of me as an old and stern man, who has forgotten that he was ever a child himself, and has lost all sympathy for boyhood. No ; I feel a great interest in boys, and love to mingle with them, and to write for them. To add to their knowledge, to promote their happiness, to strengthen their good impulses, and in any way to advance their interests, I shall always account a pleasure.

It seems but a very few years since I was myself a boy, and gaily trundled my hoop about the streets, and pored over my hard lessons with far too little patience, and went up to the house of God, each Sabbath, and listened, sometimes seriously, but too often carelessly, to the preacher. I was a Sabbath school boy, too, and remember the old, square, green-painted pew in which our little class assembled, and the pretty library books that were lent to us, and the monthly "Sabbath School Visiter," that filled the place now occupied by the "Well-Spring." How many excellent resolutions I thought of making, in those days, but never quite adopted! What a vast amount of good I laid out, to be performed when I should become a man! What a sincere, active, useful Christian I meant to be, some time or other! Ah, *there* was the great mistake. All my plans for becoming good, and doing good, had reference to the *future*, and not to the present. I forgot that the best time to put a good resolution into effect, is now, and so I waited and waited for I know not what.

So much for myself, by way of introduction. And now, my young readers, give me your confidence and attention, while you read these pages. Read carefully, ponder seriously, and try to profit by what I have written. If you find any good quality described here, to which you cannot lay claim, determine to make it yours at once. If you find any evil

habit portrayed, to which you are addicted, resolve to put it away. This is the way to read. If the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of lads whose bright eyes shall light on these pages, would all read in this manner, who can tell what happy influences would flow from this one little volume ! So may it be !

II.

HABITS.

YOU are all familiar, my young friends, with the saying of the prophet Jeremiah, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." But did you ever stop to inquire the meaning of this verse? It has a meaning, and that meaning embodies a very important truth, viz., that it is almost impossible to change our habits or customs, after they have become firmly established. It matters not whether these habits are good or bad; in either case, if they once get thoroughly rooted, the chances are that they will cling to us through life, like the dark hue of the Ethiopian, or the spotted skin of the leopard. There is, therefore, little encouragement to try to persuade old people to break up their bad habits. They will often admit the truth of what you say, when you remonstrate with them, and will express a wish that they could break the chain that binds them. "But," they will insist, "it is too late for us to reform; the habit has

become part of our nature, and it would be like cutting off a right hand to give it up. No, we can't give it up; but go and talk to the young, and warn them not to follow our example."

And to the young I will appeal. You, my readers, are now putting on habits which you are to wear, like a garment, through life. It is an easy matter, now, to choose or reject, but do not suppose that it will always be so. By-and-by these habits, which bind themselves upon you so gently and silently, will become a part of your character, and cannot be shaken off without a severe struggle. Are you realizing this? If you are, let me ask, what is the nature of these habits? Is there among them a habit of disobedience, or rudeness, or passion, or negligence, or complaining, or falsehood, or swearing, or dishonesty, or laziness, or any thing else of an evil nature? And are these the habits you would carry with you through life? Would you have these leopard-spots stamped upon your character so deeply that you cannot efface them? Ah, beware how you trifle with these vicious habits, if you would not have them obtain the mastery over you. A single indulgence may seem a small matter, but it is precisely by these single indulgences that any bad habit is formed.

So it is with good habits. "When we have practised good actions awhile," Archbishop Tillotson

says, "they become easy ; and when they are easy, we begin to take pleasure in them ; and when they please us, we do them frequently ; and by frequency of acts they grow into a habit." All this is very plain, but the young do not always understand it. It is not so hard to form good habits as they sometimes suppose. The main thing is to begin right, and to begin in season. Here, then, are two facts of great importance to the young. The first is, that *you can form such habits as you choose*. If you think tobacco-chewing a manly accomplishment, you can easily acquire it, although the first effort may not be very pleasant. If you would like to acquire a habit of tipping, or swearing, or quarreling, you have only to persevere a little while, and you will succeed. And on the other hand, if you would acquire a habit of observation, or a habit of reading, or a habit of speaking the truth, or any other desirable habit, it may be easily done, on the same principle. The effort may be a little irksome at first, but this will speedily wear off, and you will begin to take real pleasure in the struggle.

The other important fact is, that *habits adopted in youth are likely to cling to us through life*. It is related of Hercules, the ancient heathen demi-god, that he arrayed himself in a tunic, or vesture, which had been poisoned. As soon as he discovered the fact, he attempted to tear off the fatal dress ; but it

had incorporated itself with his skin, so that he could not remove it, and the venom quickly penetrated his body, until, in his desperation, he burnt himself to death to end his tortures. This story is doubtless fabulous ; but I have sometimes suspected that there might be some real truth concealed here under a fictitious guise. Possibly, this poisoned vesture is to be understood figuratively, as descriptive of the dreadful effects of some evil habits into which Hercules had fallen, and which at length goaded him to self-destruction. Whether this interpretation is correct or not, it matters little to us ; but of this I can assure you, that every bad habit you form will become like a poisonous garment, affecting more or less seriously the health and purity of body, mind and heart.

III.

GETTING USED TO IT.

WHEN gazing at a picture of a battle, with its horrible scenes of carnage and wo, did you never wonder how men could be induced to engage in such a dreadful business? And if you expressed your astonishment in words, did not some one reply, "O, they get used to it, and then they don't mind it at all!" Well, that does explain the mystery, in a very few words. A man can get used to almost anything. Habit becomes second nature; and what was very disagreeable to him at first, after a while grows pleasant, as he accustoms himself to it. This influence by which men are so easily affected, is called the power of habit. By it the way of ruin is made fearfully smooth and easy. By it, also, we are greatly aided in our progress towards the true and the good.

Some years ago, a party of Englishmen, under Sir John Ross, went to the Arctic regions, on an exploring expedition. Unfortunately, their vessel got fastened in the vast fields of ice which abound in

that desolate region, and they were obliged to remain there some five years, when another vessel came from England to their relief. The party endured many severe hardships, during their long and dreary imprisonment ; but they had become so accustomed to these things, that when aid came, they found it somewhat difficult to break up their new habits of living, unnatural as they were. Few of them, for example, could sleep upon the comfortable beds which were provided, so used had they become to reposing on the cold, hard snow and rocks.

The comfort which these men found in sleeping out doors in that cold region, upon a bed of ice, is very much like the pleasure that people sometimes derive from vicious habits. Tobacco, for instance, is very nauseous at first, though after a while it becomes pleasant to the taste. But if there is any enjoyment in chewing or smoking tobacco, there is a still greater enjoyment in letting it alone. The latter excels the former, as much as the pleasure of reposing on soft beds is superior to that of sleeping on the hard couch of the Arctic voyagers.

The ancient Romans used to have a horrible species of amusement, known as gladiatorial combats. At these entertainments, men fought with each other, and with savage beasts, and the slaughter was often terrible. When these bloody shows were first introduced, the people regarded them with horror ; but

as they grew familiar with the sickening scenes, they began to like them, and at length found their chief delight in witnessing the carnage of the arena. By merely getting used to sights of cruelty, the disposition of the people was entirely changed, and Rome, in its declining days, was deluged with blood. The effect would be the same, among us, if it were possible to revive this barbarous species of amusement. But if we have no gladiatorial shows, I fear something of the abominable spirit of these old heathen festivals still lingers amongst us. It is displayed when a gang of thoughtless boys coax a couple of their mates into an angry contest, for the sake of seeing them fight ; or when they attempt to get up a battle between two animals, for a similar reason ; or when they amuse themselves by wounding or killing harmless animals. Familiarity with such scenes, must harden the heart, and foster a cruel disposition.

The Bible tells us that the wicked "shall be holden with the cords of his sin," and you see how this is realized, by the influence which habit exercises over us. The only safe rule, then, is to avoid the *beginnings* of evil. Even a little indulgence in a bad habit, now and then, is dangerous, to a person's morals, and may end in his ruin.

But there is a bright as well as a dark side to this subject. You may accustom yourself to any good

habit, as easily as to a bad one. However unnatural or disagreeable it may seem at first, it will grow easy and pleasant, as you get used to it; and when the habit is once thoroughly established, it will give you no further trouble — it will take care of itself. Try it, my young readers, and see how this wonderful power of habit will aid you, in your efforts at self-improvement.

I V.

AS THE BOY, SO THE MAN.

Most of you, I have no doubt, often look ahead a few years, and try to imagine what you shall be, and do, when you have arrived at manhood. You naturally feel curious to know how you shall appear then, and whether you shall be distinguished for your riches, your learning, your ingenuity, your strength, your beauty, your eloquence, your position, your enterprise, or your goodness; for, of course, you expect to be distinguished for something — all boys do. But how should you like to have your fortune told, so that you could know in advance just what prizes and blanks you are to draw in the great lottery of life?

“O!” I hear some bright-eyed lad exclaim, “that would be fine — but do you believe in fortune-telling, sir?”

Yes, I believe in a certain kind of fortune-telling. It is not that kind, however, by which silly men and women are sometimes duped out of their

money by ignorant and wicked imposters, who pretend to have an absolute knowledge of future events. The fortune-telling that I believe in, is based on this great principle of the physical and moral world — “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap ;” as the seed, so the plant — as the boy, so the man. According to this principle, if I know precisely what your present habits, disposition and character are, I can guess pretty nearly what sort of a man you will make, should you grow up to maturity ; and if I also know by what influences you are surrounded, and can calculate their effects upon you, I shall be able to foretell your fortune with even more certainty. In most cases, the man is but an enlarged and mature reflection of the boy. The exceptions to this law are very few. Now and then a man may, by a great effort, suddenly change the whole direction of his life ; but ordinarily the habits and manners that he adopts in boyhood, will stick to him through life, like the features of his countenance.

There was a clergyman in Massachusetts, many years ago, who, as was then a common custom, instructed a large number of boys, in branches that were not taught in the common schools. He kept a journal, in which he recorded a general outline of the character of each of his pupils ; and in later life, when such of these boys as survived had become mature men, he said he was forcibly struck, on refer-

ing to his journal, with the fact, that in nearly every case, as was the boy so now was the man.

Another teacher related the following facts, a few years since, in a public meeting. In his preparatory course, he said, there were two boys attending the same academy, with apparently the same opportunities to rise to eminence and distinction. One of these paid very little attention to anything but his books and teachers — was always in his place, and ready to recite when called upon for his lesson. The other was not fond of his books, nor school ; but if there was a party, or ball, within inviting distance, he was always sure to get an invitation, and just as sure never to decline. Time passed on, and the boys left the academy. The industrious young man went to college, graduated with high honor, studied law, was sent to Congress, and was finally appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. And while he was thus enjoying the honors justly bestowed upon him as the fruit of a well-spent boyhood, his former party-going and pleasure-hunting companion had also found his place. And, boys, where do think it was? You shall hear. He was employed as a *street scavenger* in a country village not far from the metropolis of New England. Thus you see that whatsoever a boy soweth, that shall he also reap.

An English nobleman, Lord Shaftsbury, recently

submitted the following question to one hundred city missionaries :

“ How many, do you estimate, having lived an honest life up to twenty years of age, have afterwards fallen away and entered on vicious courses ? ”

The answer from almost every missionary was,

“ Not two in one hundred.”

What a striking illustration is this of the truth of our saying, “ As the boy so the man.”

The venerable Prof. Silliman, of Yale College, is said to have expressed it as his opinion, after a long life of observation in his intercourse with students, that the general principles, habit and character, acquired by a young man before he is seventeen years old, will not often be radically changed in after life.

An anecdote is told of Washington’s mother, which illustrates the same principle. When Lafayette, at the close of the revolutionary war, spoke to the venerable lady of the glory her son had achieved, Mrs. Washington made this memorable reply :

“ I am not surprised, *for George was always a good boy.*”

Among the young men who entered Harvard College in the class of 1770, there was a lad who, but three or four months previous, had completed his twelfth year. I do not think it was a very safe place for a youth of his tender years—away from the

counsels and restraints of home, under a discipline designed for those who are old enough to govern themselves, and thrown into the society of young men older than himself, among whom there must have been not a few wild and reckless spirits. But, despite all these dangers, the little student passed through college unscathed, and became so good and eminent a man, that thirty years after he graduated, he was elected president of that very college. That incorruptible little boy, and that eminent man, was Fisher Ames ; and thus his biographer explains the secret of his greatness :

“His spotless youth brought blessings to the whole remainder of his life. Beginning well, he advanced with unremitted steps in the race of virtue, and arrived at the end of life with peace and honor.”

What a sermon to boys do those few lines contain ! My young reader, have you begun well ? If you have not, even now it may not be too late to correct your error.

V.

ATTENTION.

IN books, and newspapers, and letters, you will often see the letters "N. B." prefixed to a sentence. They stand for the Latin words *Nota Bene*, and mean, *observe well*, or *take notice*. I have been thinking that perhaps "N. B." would not be a bad maxim for some of you to adopt. It is so short that you could hardly forget it, even if you wished to do so; and the lesson, or admonition, which it conveys, is a very valuable one. Observe well — take notice — pay attention — is not that very good advice for a heedless young fellow, who is always in such a hurry that he never can stop to notice anything? There is Eddy, for instance, who, when sent on an errand, is sure to do it wrong, because he didn't notice the directions given him. When his father is telling him where to go, and what to say, he is thinking of something else; and when he undertakes to deliver the message, he finds that he has forgotten one half of it, and isn't quite sure of the other half.

Then there is Thomas, who is hardly ever able to answer correctly the questions in his Sabbath school lesson. He studies the lesson, in his way; that is, he looks it over hurriedly, and hunts up the Bible references; but he pays so little *attention* to what he is about, that he would scarcely be able to tell the subject of the lesson, if the title were not printed in the question book. He is a dull scholar at the week-day school, too, and will never rank very high in his class, unless he learns to give his mind to his lessons.

And there is John, who has lately gone to work at a trade. He means well enough, but his master complains that he is thoughtless, and doesn't notice what he is doing, and thus spoils a great deal of work. Now if "N. B." could be stamped in great letters upon John's work-bench, and Thomas's school books, and Eddy's memory, until it cured them of their bad habits, do you not think it would be a blessing to them?

Take notice — observe well — give your mind to your lessons — that is the way to learn. Do this, and you will be all the time picking up and storing away ideas in your mind. The habit you will thus form will be of great value to you through life. It has led many to wealth, learning and distinction. Better than this, it has led many others into the kingdom of heaven. Religion suffers more from

inattention and thoughtlessness, perhaps, than from anything else. The first step to conversion is to take notice, to observe, to give attention to the claims of the Saviour. Will you not think of this, and resolve to acquire this habit of observation and attention?

Did you ever read of the remarkable sagacity which the Arabs manifest, in drawing conclusions from the foot-prints of animals and men in the desert? An expert Bedouin can tell, from the tracks in the sand, whether the camel that has passed was loaded or unloaded, whether recently fed or suffering from hunger, whether fatigued or fresh, the time when it passed by, whether the owner was a man of the desert or of the town, whether a friend or foe, and sometimes even the name of the tribe.

Here you see what this habit of taking notice can do for the poor son of the desert. And should you like to know how the Arab acquires this valuable habit? He does it before he is as old as many of you are, as you may see from the following extract, which I copy from Mr. Layard's "Nineveh and Babylon." He says:—

"This quickness of perception is the result of continual observation and of caution, encouraged from earliest youth. When the warriors of a tribe are engaged in distant forays, or in war, their tents and flocks are frequently left to the care of a mere

child. He must receive strangers, amongst whom may be those having claims of blood upon his family, and must guard against marauders who may be lurking about the encampment. Every unknown sign and mark must be examined and accounted for. If he should see the track of a horseman, he must ask himself why one so near the dwelling did not stop to eat bread and drink water? was he a spy — one of a party meditating attack? or a traveler, who did not know the site of the tents? When did he pass? From whence did he come? Whilst the child in a civilized country is still under the care of the nurse, the Bedouin boy is compelled to exercise his highest faculties, and on his prudence and sagacity may sometimes depend the safety of his tribe."

This habit, which the boys of the desert find so necessary, is also of great importance to the boys of civilized life. And now, Eddy, and Thomas, and John, and all the rest of you who have fallen into habits of inattention, I hope you will at least "observe well" this admonition.

VI.

REPUTATION.

YOU have often heard men speak of their reputation, as something which they value more than gold or personal comfort. Next to the approval of God and their own consciences, they esteem the good opinions of their fellow-men. A stain upon their good name, would be almost the worst earthly calamity that could befall them. This is the feeling of all honorable, upright and high-minded men. And it is a proper feeling; for the wise man has said,

“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.”

Even bad men often set a high value upon a good name, and will make most extraordinary efforts to retain it, after their characters have become utterly corrupt. Hypocrisy is only a tribute which bad men pay to virtue. No man, who has not reached the lowest depth of degradation, is willing to have his name become a reproach and a by-word among men.

You all know very well what this jewel is, that is thus prized by the good, and reluctantly yielded up

by the bad. But have you ever considered that it is a treasure which may be worn by the young as well as the old? Have you begun to bind it around your heart, and to cherish it as something you have determined never to part with? If you have not, then you have made a great mistake, in setting out upon your journey of life.

A man's reputation is the product of an innumerable multitude of acts. He begins to form it in very early life. You, my young friends, have already commenced the process, and each one of you has even now a reputation, either good or bad. You are adding to and confirming it, every day. Your associates know what it is, and so do your parents, teachers and neighbors. Is it, let me ask, such a reputation as you would like to carry with you through life? Is it a GOOD NAME—spotless and without reproach?

No youth of good sense and character will be indifferent to the opinions of others. Sometimes we hear bad, bold boys say that they do not care what people think of them; but I suspect this is seldom true. They *do* care for the opinion of others, more than they are willing to confess. They cannot help it, if they would. God has implanted within us this natural desire to appear well in the eyes of others, and none but the most abandoned are free from its influence.

A good reputation may not only be acquired in boyhood, but many important advantages may flow from it, even in that early period of life. You have all witnessed illustrations of this, in the little circle of your own acquaintance. The boy who has a good name, is believed when others are doubted, and trusted where others are not allowed to go. Even if he occasionally does wrong, his good character shields him from the consequences, and he is forgiven. When he leaves school, and seeks employment, his good name is a passport to a good situation; and thus, at every step through life, does he realize more and more that virtue is its own reward.

Two or three boys were once arrested in Boston, charged with throwing stones in the streets. They were very much alarmed at the idea of being taken before a court; but when their trial came on, their schoolmaster appeared, and gave them such a good character, that the judge was satisfied their offence was unintentional, and let them off with the smallest fine the law would allow. Thus did they experience one of the benefits of having a good name.

How different is the case with those who are cursed with a bad name. They not only fare hard, when actually guilty of wrong doing, but are often suspected and blamed when innocent. Every mischievous act that cannot be traced to its source, is laid at their door, and thus they become the scapegoats of

the circle in which they move. As they grow up to manhood, they find themselves the victims of evil and mischievous reports, which ever hover around and keep before them, stealing into the ears of those whose good-will they wish to win, and disappointing all their hopes and plans. They may now reform their ways, but O, how hard it is to shake off a bad name !

My young reader, commence now, if you have not already, and earn for yourself that which is rather to be chosen than great riches — a good name.

“ Children, choose it, don't refuse it,
'T is a precious diadem ;
Highly prize it, don't despise it,
You will need it when you're men.

“ Love and cherish, keep and nourish,
'T is more precious far than gold ;
Watch and guard it, don't discard it,
You will need it when you're old.”

VII.

WISHING.

Not long ago, as I was walking in the street, I happened to overhear the following conversation between two small lads, who were returning home from school, with their books under their arms.

"I wish," said one, "that I knew as much as Daniel Webster."

"And I wish," said the other, "that I knew more than anybody else in the world."

I was reminded of the old proverb, "If wishes were horses, beggars might ride." How easy it is to wish! And what harm is there in it? None, that I know of, provided you wish for right things, and are willing to do something more than wish, to obtain them. But if you sit still, and wish, and expect that the object of your desire will come to you, without an effort, I do not think your wishes will ever be of much use to you.

"I wish I could learn my lessons as well as Charley," says George. Well, how do you know that you cannot? Did you ever try — or do you expect

to learn them without trying? Do you not suppose that it costs Charley some effort to keep at the head of his class? No doubt it does, and you will not stand by his side until you study hard, as well as wish hard.

“I wish I could break myself of it,” said another boy, when reproved for a bad habit he had acquired. He *could* have broken up the habit, if he had really tried; but he did not make the attempt, and the habit went on, growing worse and worse. He contented himself with wishing—but no boy ever yet succeeded in wishing away a bad habit.

“I wish I knew how to skate,” said another little boy. After a while he procured a pair of skates, and went down to the pond; but his legs refused to support him upon the thin, smooth irons, and he fell upon the ice again and again. So he became discouraged, and gave up the attempt; whereas, if he had persevered a little while, he would have soon felt at ease upon his skates.

There was another little fellow who, on trying to skate for the first time, paid the usual penalty. Having hurt himself somewhat by the fall, his brother advised him to “give it up.”

“No, I *shan't* give it up,” was his manly reply; “I *can* learn to skate, and I *will* learn.”

And he went at it again, with an energy and determination that soon overcame all difficulties.

Ah, that is the way to wish. A boy who will not content himself with wishing, but who is determined to do what he knows he *can* do, will be very likely to turn his wishes into realities.

“I wish I could become a Christian!” How many youth have uttered this language, in their serious moments! Some of my readers, probably, have indulged in this wish. But was it a sincere wish? Did it end in wishing, or did you make an earnest effort to realize it? It was a commendable, yes, a blessed wish, but did you really *try* to obtain the wished-for good? Were you summoned into the presence of your Maker to-day, could you say to him,

“Lord, if I am not prepared to meet thee, it is not my fault, for I earnestly *wished* to become a Christian?”

Ah, I fear your wishes were poor things, if they have not resulted in any good. There are many promises in the Bible for those who *try* to become Christians, but I can think of none for those who merely wish.

“Those that seek me early, shall find me.”

“If thou seek him, he will be found of thee.”

“But ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

These are the promises of God, and he will make them good, if you fulfil the only condition, and *seek* him. Will you give up the attempt? or will you

act in the spirit of the boy who was learning to skate, and say,

“No, I will not give it up; I *can* seek the Lord, and I *will* seek him.”

If the prodigal son had said, “I wish I could return to my father’s house,” and yet made no effort to go, he would have perished among his swine. So a mere wish to enter the kingdom of heaven, without any corresponding action, will be utterly worthless.

Here, then, is the law of wishing, in a few words :

1. Wish for things that it is lawful to desire. There are more foolish and sinful wishes cherished, than good ones.

2. Wish from right motives. The boy who wished that he knew more than anybody else in the world, was, I fear, actuated by a selfish motive.

3. Remember that if a thing is worth wishing for, it is worth striving for, and that patient effort must be put forth, if we would realize the object of our desires.

VIII.

WANTED.

“HERE, John, you are wanted,” said a shop-keeper to his errand boy, who was in a distant part of the room. Who John was, or who wanted him, or for what he was wanted, is of little consequence ; but the words, “*John, you are wanted,*” ring in my ears, and set me to thinking. And thus it was that my thoughts ran on :

John is a boy of some consequence. He is *wanted*. He is good for something. He has capabilities, of some sort or other. They may be of an humble order, but if he rightly improves them, they are valuable to his employer and to the world. He has duties and responsibilities, too, for these always accompany capability. He is not a mere piece of useless rubbish, in this busy world, but is a part of the great living machinery by which God is carrying forward his designs. No, John is not a cypher — he is something, or his master would not want him.

Then, again, John is a lucky boy. Not to be

wanted, is a misfortune indeed. Ask the poor lad, — a stranger in the great city, — who has gone wearily from shop to shop with the timid inquiry, “Do you want a boy, sir?” and every time received the same disheartening answer, “No.” No wonder he feels sad and discouraged, for nobody wants him. Or ask the poor man who seeks in vain for work by which to earn bread for his children. Nobody wants him, and despair settles down over his soul. It is indeed a blessed privilege to be wanted.

But John is not the only boy to whom the message comes, “You are wanted.” The same call is addressed to all of you, my young friends. Each one of you is wanted. God has provided work for every pair of hands he has made. He has given you a particular work to do, which no one else can perform for you. If not done by yourself, it will not be done at all, and the world will be the poorer for your unfaithfulness.

Some of you, — yes, many, — are wanted to preach the Gospel. The men who are now engaged in this service, will in a few years be called from their labors to their reward, and their places must be filled by those who are now boys. And these boys are to come chiefly from the Sabbath School. It was said, some years ago, that nineteen-twentieths of the missionaries who had gone from Great Britain to the heathen, received their first religious impressions in

the Sabbath school ; and of the evangelical ministers of England, under forty years of age, more than two-thirds became pious at these schools. Of the youth who weekly assemble in our Sabbath schools, thousands are wanted for this service.

Some of you are wanted to be the teachers of future generations of children. Some, to explore the mysteries of science. Some, to be physicians, and lawyers, and magistrates, and authors, and editors. Some of you are wanted to till the ground, and to supply the teeming millions that are to come, with bread. Some, to make shoes, and some, to build steamships and railroads. Some, to carry on our factories, and some, to manage our commerce.

All of you are wanted, to bless the world with the sweet and holy influence of a good example—to preach the Gospel through the medium of a pure and consistent life. You are wanted, to give precept and exhortation, as well as example, and to labor as private Christians, for the good of the world. You are wanted to help carry forward the various reforms and benevolent enterprises that are now in their infancy. In a word, you are all wanted to do your part in hastening the coming of that day when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

“ All around us clarion voices
Call to duty, stern and high.”

Yes, you are wanted. Think of this often, until your mind becomes accustomed to the thought. When you have a hard lesson to learn, or a disagreeable piece of work to do, or are denied an indulgence you crave, remember that you are wanted, and that this discipline is necessary to prepare you for the service that is expected of you. A few years are given you, to fit yourself for duty. These precious years are now yours — they are the years of your youth. Are you improving them aright? Are you preparing yourself to do good service for God and for your fellow-men? These are questions that you should seriously ponder.

You are wanted — but God does not require you to work for nothing. If faithful in your allotted sphere of duty, large and sure will be your reward, not only in this life, but in that which is to come.

IX.

AIMS.

I HAVE talked with you a little about the future, and tried to make you realize that you are now putting on characters which you are to wear through life. If you *do* realize this truth, you cannot help wishing to form a character that you will not be ashamed of hereafter ; and if this wish is earnest and sincere, you will try to do something towards securing its fulfilment. In other words, you will *aim* to make a good man.

It is a great day for a boy or a man, when he first begins to have an aim, if it only be a good one. If he remains unwavering in his adherence to that aim, the effect will be manifest on his whole future life. It will incite him to noble efforts, and will help him to accomplish what would otherwise have seemed impossible. The grand secret of success in life, is to set out in youth with a definite object in view, and to pursue it steadily until it is attained. This is the way great men are made, and great deeds are accomplished.

“ Sound the clarion, thrill the fife,
To all the sensual crowd proclaim,
One single hour of glorious strife
Is worth an age without an aim.”

“ But,” says some lad, “ I am too young to have an aim. I mean to be something, but I can't tell exactly what, just yet. By-and-by I shall be more capable of laying out a work for life than I am now.”

This may be true, though I believe that in many cases wise and noble aims are adopted even in boyhood. But if you are too young to determine what shall be the fixed purpose of your life, you are certainly old enough to do all that is required of any boy, and that is, *to aim to make a good beginning*. You are old enough to reason thus with yourself :

“ I am only a small boy now, but I shall soon be a man. I can't do much yet, but I am laying a foundation to work upon hereafter. I don't know precisely what the structure will be, when it is finished, but I mean that it shall be something that I shall not be ashamed of. I can't tell whether it will be distinguished for its strength, or its grace, or its height, or its usefulness ; but however that may be, I do know that a good foundation will not come amiss, and that now is the time to lay it. So I mean to look well to the foundation, and that shall be my aim for the present.”

This is a good aim to begin life with, and if you adhere to it steadily in the days of your boyhood, you will soon be prepared to adopt more definite aims. Indeed, if you do not form some such purpose as this now, it is quite possible that you never will have a worthy object to live for. Thousands live and die without ever having had any settled plan of life, or any particular aim, beyond obtaining enough to eat, drink and wear. Such a life is befitting a brute, but it is unworthy a living soul, made in God's image.

A home missionary in New Hampshire once asked a very ignorant little girl of twelve what was the chief end of man. She replied,

“To work.”

This, as my youngest reader must know, is not the *highest* end for which man was created ; but that God designed that we all should work, I have no doubt. He has given us all plenty of work to do, and heads, hands, feet, and sinews to do it with. All our aims, therefore, should have regard to this design of our Creator. We must not expect or desire to live a life of ease and indolence. That aim which does not have for its object some good accomplished, and some useful labor performed, does not deserve to be called an aim. Life was not designed to be a mere pleasure excursion. When we set out on the voyage of existence, we not only

ought to know where we are going, but we should also have a good reason for going there. Our bark must not go forth nor return empty. God has chartered it for some particular service, if I may use a mercantile expression. Let us try to find out what that purpose is, and then endeavor to carry it through with all diligence.

If you will read the biographies of great and good men, you will find a fixed purpose running through their entire lives, like a silver thread, connecting one year with another, and binding all their separate actions together into a harmonious whole. So was it with Luther, and Washington, and Franklin; with the Pilgrim fathers and mothers who laid the foundations of New England; with Newton, and Watt, and Fulton; with Mary Lyon, and Dr. Judson, and Harlan Page. All these *worked to a plan*; and so, my young friends, must you and I work, even in our humble spheres, if we would not have our lives prove a failure.

X.

PERSEVERANCE.

NEXT to a good aim, perseverance is necessary to a useful and successful life. It is easy to sit down and mark out a course, and resolve to do thus and so ; but it is quite another thing to carry our plans into effect. A great many people take good aim, but never fire. They form noble purposes, but they never do anything else ; and they might just as well have resolved, in the beginning, to shut themselves up, like the clam in its shell, and let the world take care of itself as best it can. The world will derive no benefit from their good plans and resolutions.

But show me a boy who perseveres until he has accomplished his purpose — who sticks to his good resolutions, whatever the temptation may be to abandon them — who persists in walking in the path he has marked out, in spite of every effort to turn him aside — show me such a boy, and I will show you one who will make a TRUE MAN, should his life be spared.

Some seventy or more years ago, there lived in Salem a poor boy who had determined to get an education. He was confined in a shop through the day, and had but few advantages and little time for carrying out his design. He was not discouraged, however, but persevered like a hero, and every month witnessed his progress toward the object of his ambition. That boy was afterwards known throughout the civilized world as Dr. Bowditch, one of the most learned and famous scientific men our country has ever produced. But all that Bowditch ever knew, he learned; and all that he learned, he acquired by diligent and persevering application. You can form some idea of his indomitable perseverance, from a little incident that is related of him. While he was a boy, a valuable private library, which had been captured at sea, arrived in Salem. These books were a rare prize for those days, and young Bowditch borrowed a number of them from the person who had charge of them. The volumes were retained longer than was necessary for a simple perusal, and it was afterwards ascertained that the young student was so anxious to possess them, that he actually *copied* twenty ponderous folio and quarto volumes of scientific works, and thus made them his own! These volumes, which at that time he dared not think of purchasing, were of great service to him in after years; and his children have carefully pre-

served them, as precious memorials of the perseverance of their father.

A young American writing from Germany concerning the greatest pianist in the world, says, "He has attained his eminence by the most diligent pains-taking. He has practised fourteen hours a day for two weeks on two measures of music, so determined was he to conquer." No wonder that such a man stands at the head of his profession.

When Richard Brinsley Sheridan made his first speech in Parliament, it was regarded on all hands as a most mortifying failure. His friends urged him to abandon a Parliamentary career, and enter upon some field better suited to his ability. "No," said Sheridan — "no, it is in me, and it *shall come out!*" And it did, and he became one of the most splendid debaters in England.

The value of perseverance is frequently illustrated in the history of business enterprises. Twelve or fifteen years ago, a poor but industrious man commenced travelling back and forth between New York and Boston, as an express messenger. At first he met with but little encouragement. Sometimes he cleared but twenty-five cents by a trip. But he kept journeying to and fro with his little carpet-bag in hand, until at length his perseverance and fidelity began to attract the attention of business men, and he commenced reaping the fruits of his patient

industry. That man is now at the head of the great express and banking house of Adams & Co. — probably the most wealthy and extensive concern of the kind in the world. How many men would have become discouraged, and retired from the field, after half a dozen unprofitable trips with that half-filled carpet-bag !

In our efforts to conquer our own faults, perseverance is equally necessary. We must not be discouraged if we cannot exterminate the deep-rooted thistles and brambles of our hearts at a single effort. If they keep springing up anew, we must continue to root them up, just as fast as they show themselves. If they are obstinate, let us be persevering. By-and-bye they will grow weak, the soil of the heart will work itself free of them, and then the victory will be ours.

So, too, there is often need of great perseverance in doing good. The Moravian missionaries to Greenland and Labrador labored for many years apparently in vain. They could not even make the degraded people believe they had souls. But they persevered, and now their converts are numbered by thousands. If you will read the history of almost any mission, you will find that the whole secret of success has been “prayer, pains, and perseverance.”

If, then, my young friends, you desire to succeed

in your studies or your labors, or in your efforts to correct your own faults, or to benefit others, remember that the secret is contained in this word — PERSEVERANCE. What others have done, you may do, if you will put forth the same effort.



XI.

DO YOUR BEST.

HERE, boys, is a direction with which you are all familiar. You often hear it on the play-ground, while engaged in friendly contests with your mates. You hear it in the school-room, when the teacher wishes to incite you to an unusual effort. Your parents repeat it to you, in the house ; and the pleasant stranger who regards you with so much interest as you pass along the street, seems to echo the same admonition, — “ Boys, do your best.”

“Do your best.” That was what a venerable man once said to his grandchild, from whom he was about parting. “Whatever you do,” he said, “do the best you can.” The little boy always remembered those words, and they proved more valuable to him than gold. When he had any work to do, he tried to “do his best,” and was rewarded for his pains not only by an inward satisfaction, but often by the kind approval of his parents. When he was fifteen years old, he was sent to an academy, where he had partly to earn his way through the course. “The lessons came hard at first,” he says, “for I was not fond of study ; but grandfather’s advice was my motto, and I tried to do my best. As a consequence of this, though I was small of my age, and not very strong, my mother had three offers for me before the year was out, and one was from the best merchant in the village, ‘a place’ in whose store was considered very desirable. When I joined the church, I tried to do the Lord’s work as well as I did my own ; and often when I have been tempted to leave the Sabbath school, or let a small hindrance keep me from a prayer meeting, or get discouraged in any good thing, my grandfather’s last words, ‘Do the best you can,’ have given me fresh courage, and I would again try ; for if we do what we can, we can safely leave the rest with God.” Thus, by adopting

"Do your best" as his motto, this little boy became a highly respectable and useful man.

Two boys were playing together. When the game was brought to an end, by the victory of one of them, the other exclaimed,

"Well, I don't care, I can do better than that, I know, — I didn't try do my best."

Ah, my little fellow, if you act on that principle through life, you will always come out "second best."

Robert had set his heart upon obtaining a prize at school. He was not so forward in his studies as some other members of his class, but he was a well-behaved boy, and as there was to be a prize given for "good behavior," he hoped to win it. But at the end of the term, the teacher's record showed that he had whispered once or twice too much, and the coveted prize was given to another. Poor Robert had done very well, but he had not "done his best."

Every year, a good many boys from the Grammar Schools of Boston are examined for admission to the High School; but a large proportion are always rejected, to their mortification and disappointment. The reason is, they have not "done their best," while at school, and they must wait another whole year, before they can retrieve their mistake, if, indeed, they do not get discouraged from the attempt. A year of lost time is a pretty severe penalty for

their error ; but if it teaches them to “ do their best ” ever after, the lesson will be well worth the price it cost.

A young lad entered into the service of a merchant as errand boy, with the determination of “ doing his best.” His employer never had occasion to find fault with him. Every duty was promptly and faithfully done. Soon the merchant promoted him to a clerkship ; and then he made him his confidential friend and favorite ; and at length he admitted him as a partner in his business. He had had many other boys, before this one, but none of them tried to “ do their best.”

No pursuit or employment is so humble, as to excuse those engaged in it from “ doing their best.” “ If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well.” That is an old saying, but it is a very true one. I recollect reading of a dispute between two rival villages on Long Island, as to which possessed the most expert clam diggers. The dispute ran high, and at length it was settled by a public trial between the champions of each village, a purse of ten dollars being presented to the victor. I do not think there was anything ridiculous in this. There is a dignity in the humblest forms of labor, when a man engages in it with the determination of “ doing his best.”

Make this your rule, then, my young friends, to

“do your best” with every thing you undertake ; not your second-best, nor very well, nor pretty well, as many are satisfied with doing, but your *very best*. You will never regret adopting this as your standard.

XII.

LITTLE FAULTS—WHAT THEY ARE.

MANY of you, I suppose, are somewhat acquainted with the microscope—the instrument by which very small objects are magnified, and presented to the eye in an enlarged form. It is very interesting and instructive, to look through the lenses of this curious instrument, and to see how perfect God has made the most minute objects that come from his hand. There are, for instance, many common insects, so small that you would never imagine there could be any beauty about them ; but put them under the microscope, and you will find that they possess an elegance of form and brilliancy of color, which the most gay and beautiful of our birds cannot rival. There is another class of insects, quite as insignificant to the natural eye as these, which, when magnified, are found to be fully as savage and ferocious in their disposition as the tiger, and as repulsive and terrible to the eye as the largest and ugliest spider. It is curious to see how these apparently weak and harmless little mites

are transformed by the microscope into terrible giants, armed with powerful pincers, and formidable claws, and deadly stings, and frightful jaws—their huge bodies bristling with ugly hairs, and their whole appearance suggestive of strength and ferocity. I said *transformed*, but that is not the idea; for the microscope does not alter their appearance, but only shows them as they are, and as they appear, I suppose, to other insects.

When I see a boy knowingly indulging in what are commonly called “little faults,” or hear him talk lightly of what he considers “little sins,” I feel like asking him to step into my study, and to look into an instrument which I call my *moral microscope*. It is a wonderful contrivance, and the effect it produces is very surprising, to one who witnesses it for the first time. Like the common microscope, it has its lenses, or magnifying glasses, through which the object to be examined is seen. These lenses are as clear as crystal, and free from the slightest trace of flaw or imperfection. One of them is the character of God—a combination of holiness, justice, truth, wisdom, goodness, and mercy. The other lens is the law of God, which is perfect, holy, just, and immutable.

Now suppose we take one of these little sins, and examine it under this microscope. No matter what it is—so we will begin with “fibbing,” as little

Johnny calls it, when he tells an untruth, and insists that it is not a falsehood. Well, Johnny, look at it now.

“O, it’s a great ugly lie! Why, who would have thought it!”

Sure enough, it belongs to the lie family, and has all the hateful marks of its tribe, though on a small scale.

There is George, who is harboring enmity against a playmate for some real or supposed injury; let us put his feelings under our moral microscope, and see how they look. Step up, George, and see the viper you are hiding in your heart. Why, he retreats with a shudder,—and well he may, for his “little sin” has swelled into the horrible image of murder. Now, George, you know what the Bible means, when it says, “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.”

And so we might go through the entire list of “little sins,” and trivial faults, and show that they all have hateful and repulsive features, indicative of their common origin—a wicked heart. They are all a scorpion brood, the least as well as the greatest, The hideous mark of sin is upon them all, and there is no security so long as we allow the smallest of them to remain in our hearts. Our moral microscope does not make them one whit worse than they are. It only shows them in their true character, just as God sees them. Perhaps you have sometimes wondered

that good men lamented so much over their sins, while many really wicked men seemed to think themselves quite righteous. Here you have the explanation. The Christian looks at his sins through this moral microscope, and sees their true nature ; but the self-righteous man regards his with the eye of the natural heart, and thinks them too insignificant for his notice.

My readers must not understand me as representing one sin to be as dangerous and as wicked as another. There are degrees in guilt, extending from the slight stumblings of the almost sanctified child of God, to the desperate malice and determined rebellion of Satan. But all sin, whatever its degree, bears the same family likeness, and is offensive to God and to all holy beings. A new-born tiger may appear as harmless as a kitten ; but it is a tiger, nevertheless, and its nature is cruel and ferocious. So what we call little faults may seem harmless, to the natural mind, although they really possess the essential elements of all sin.

XIII.

LITTLE FAULTS—WHAT THEY DO,

HAVING tried to show you that trifling faults and little sins, as they are sometimes called, are of the same nature, and possess the same odious features, as great sins, I wish now to say a few words about the mischief they do.

Our little sins, and those ferocious insect tribes to which I have compared them, are widely unlike each other in one respect. The minute insect that looks so much like a scorpion or a dragon, can never grow up and become one of those formidable animals; but it is not so with a bad habit, which, from an almost imperceptible and apparently harmless thing, may grow into a gigantic and hideous monster. Indeed, all great sins have their beginning in little sins. The hard-hearted miser, who has no affection for anything but gold, was once the stingy little boy, who would never allow his mates to share in his good things. The confirmed thief, who is shut up in prison for the public safety, began his career by pil-

fering trifling articles from his parents and comrades, when a boy. The hardened villain, who is ready for any crime, is the same boy who used to laugh when his parents and teachers appealed to his conscience, and who manifested an entire indifference to moral considerations, when but fourteen or sixteen years old. Thus it is that little faults and sins are the germs of great ones. They are the evil seed with which the adversary sows the heart. When the farmer sows his field, a little child can carry the seed he uses; but the great sturdy oxen can scarcely draw home the harvest. So is it with the harvest of evil which often springs up from a few little seeds, when they are allowed to take root in the heart.

But it sometimes happens that very sad consequences result from little faults immediately, before they have had an opportunity to grow up into great sins. A boy in Quebec went to bed one night, and carelessly left a candle burning in his room, in close contact with some combustible article. A moment's thought or attention would have apprised him of the danger; but, like many other boys, he was careless and heedless, ("little faults," he probably considered them,) and the consequence was, a fire broke out, which destroyed fifteen or twenty houses. Two young men in Kentucky went to a "raffling match," and got into a quarrel about a trifling sum of money — only seven cents. They probably considered

raffling and quarreling very slight faults ; but when one of them drew a knife, and plunged it into the heart of the other, killing him instantly, the lookers-on must have been deeply impressed with the fact that terrible results sometimes flow from little sins. When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, it might have seemed to them a very small offence ; but what momentous consequences hung upon that single act !

“ Never mind, it’s only a trifle,” is the sweet but deceptive voice that has lured many a youth to ruin. Beware of it, my young friends, for it will do you no good.

“ Think nought a trifle, though it small appear ;
Sands make the mountain, moments make the year,
And trifles life. Your care to trifles give,
Else you may die ere you have learned to live.”

I could relate many curious facts, showing the importance of trifles. The variation of a conductor’s watch one minute and three-quarters from the true time, caused a collision on the Providence and Worcester Railroad, a year or two ago, by which some fourteen lives were lost, and many persons injured. A man once gave another a check for \$11.50 ; but he omitted the dot between the dollars and cents, and the bankers paid the holder of the check eleven hundred and fifty dollars, instead of eleven dollars and a

half, and could not recover the money again. But if trifles are often of the utmost importance in business affairs, they are still more so in moral matters. The eternal happiness or misery of a soul may depend upon what appears to be a trifle. David recognized this truth, when he exclaimed, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults,"—those little faults, so small and so cunning that they escaped his own vigilant eye, and were visible only to Him who "knoweth the secrets of the heart." We, too, have need to offer this prayer; and while we pray to be delivered from these little sins, we should also watch earnestly against them; for prayer without effort will be in vain.

XIV.

LOVE YOUR PARENTS.

A GENTLEMAN who was visiting one of our insane asylums, not long ago, noticed a woman, with a very sad expression of countenance, looking intently into a little pond in the garden of the institution. On inquiring who she was, the doctor informed him that she was the wife of an industrious man living in an adjoining town. They had a family of three boys, he said, two of whom died suddenly of scarlet fever, at about the same time. Within a week of their burial, the mother proceeded to a pond near by for some water. As she was dipping her pail, she saw something just beneath the surface which attracted her attention, and taking a wooden rake, she drew it to the bank: it proved to be the body of her only remaining child. A walnut shell, with a piece of paper stuck in the centre, was floating upon the water, and the boy was probably playing with this, when he fell into the pond. Before sunset the poor mother was mad — raving mad. She was sent to the asylum, and it was her daily practice to look into

the pond in the garden, just at the hour she discovered the body of her child, and then to return quietly to her work. If she was not allowed to go to the water, she would fall into violent fits and convulsions. And thus did she pass year after year, in patient watching for her lost boy. No smile was ever seen upon her pale, thin face — there was nothing there but hopeless grief.

There was a father, too, who lost a little boy. The child was playing with a paper balloon, which lodged in a tree ; and in attempting to rescue it, he fell from a limb, and was killed. The father loved the little boy very much ; and he took his loss so much to heart, that it made him insane. One day, soon after his bereavement, he went out with his axe, and cut down the tree from which the lad had fallen ; and after he had felled it, he searched carefully among all the branches, and called out, “ Patrick ! Patrick ! ” as though he expected to find his lost son. Poor man ! he will go to the child, but the child will no more return to him.

My young friends, most of you have fathers and mothers. Do you suppose they love you as tenderly as these poor insane parents loved *their* children ? I have no doubt that many if not all of them do. Why should they not ? God has given them the same natural affections ; and no one can know how strong these affections are, till the object upon which they

are fastened is removed by death, And if your parents' hearts are filled with this strong love towards you, do you think you can love them too well, or do too much to make them happy? Suppose little Patrick could have returned to life, and seen his father hunting among the branches of the tree, and calling piteously for him; and suppose the other boy could have come back to this world, after his grief-stricken mother had been watching the little pond five years to discover him;—in that case, should you not have said that those boys ought to prize their parents' love above every other earthly good? And ought they not to be very careful not to wound the hearts so closely knit to theirs? Well, if unkindness and undutifulness would be very wrong in them, how much better would these vices appear in *your* conduct? You must measure the love of your parents before you can answer that question—and that it is impossible for you to do.

It is sad indeed to see a father's or a mother's heart broken by the death of a beloved child; but there is one sight much worse than that—it is to see a parent's heart broken by the *wicked life* of a favorite son. There was a young man named Nathaniel, who was employed as a mail-carrier in a Southern State. He was supposed to be honest, but his principles were not very strong. He wanted more money than he could honestly earn; and as he was entrusted with valuable letters, why could he not open some of

them, and supply his wants, without being detected? He harbored the wicked thought, and by-and-bye he yielded to the temptation, and robbed the mail; but his crime was discovered, and he was tried, and sentenced to the penitentiary. He had a father who tenderly loved him, and who, I have no doubt, looked to him as the comfort and pride of his old age. O, what a cruel blow to him was the crime of that young man! The dagger went deep into the father's soul, and in a few weeks after the arrest of his son, he died of a broken heart. And thus has many a father, and many a mother too, gone down to an untimely grave—the victim of grief for a son's misconduct.

An eminent statesman had a son, who was as dear to him as the apple of his eye. The youth possessed a manly form, and talents of the highest order. But in college he contracted intemperate habits, and while yet a young man, the sun of his prosperity set in ignoble darkness. He abused his father's kindness, and squandered his property, and at length died in an almshouse. When the news of his miserable end was brought to his aged father, the stricken man exclaimed, "Had I been flayed alive, I could not have suffered more than I have suffered for that child!"

Boys, cherish and repay the affection of your parents, and let not their happiness be marred by your misconduct. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

XV.

OBEDIENCE.

I HAVE spoken of the strong affection which your parents cherish towards you, and of the love that ought to flow back to them from your own hearts, in return for all that they have done and suffered for you. Every generous boy, who reflects a moment about the matter, must admit that he cannot do too much to promote the happiness of his parents. But after all, perhaps the precise *what to do*, to secure this desirable end, is not very apparent to all my young readers.

“If I had ten thousand dollars,” says one, “I would give it all to my poor widowed mother.”

“If my parents’ lives were in danger,” says another, “I would peril my own to save them.”

Another wishes he might testify his love for his parents by some great sacrifice, such as George Washington made when he relinquished his intention of going to sea, after all things were in readiness, out of regard to his mother’s feelings.

But let me tell you, my young friends, that if you

wait for an opportunity to "do some great thing," in proof of your affection for your parents, you may wait in vain. It is not permitted to all of us to make heroic sacrifices, or to manifest our characters by great and daring acts. Nor need we be sorry that it is so; for there *is* a way in which *all* may evince their filial affection so plainly as not to leave a doubt of their sincerity. The secret is locked up in this verse :—

"Behold to OBEY is better than sacrifice, and to HEARKEN than the fat of rams."

In these memorable words, Samuel taught Saul that no offering or sacrifice could be acceptable from one who had not a teachable and obedient heart. To hearken to the commands of God, and to obey them, is far better proof of love for Him, than to offer the most costly sacrifices. So is it with parents and children. The most beautiful and conclusive proof you can give of your affection for your parents, is to render prompt and strict obedience to all their requirements. Happy the father or the mother who can say,

"I know that my children love me, for they never wish to disobey me!"

Happy the children, who can point to such a sure token of their filial love!

I need not tell you that obedience to parents is a duty. The youngest of my readers can repeat some

of the commands of the Bible on this subject ; such, for example, as the following :

“ My son, keep thy father’s commandment ; and forsake not the law of thy mother.”

“ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

“ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.”

There are many similar passages in the Bible, with which you are all more or less familiar. You cannot doubt that it is God’s will that you should render a prompt and cheerful obedience to your parents. So important did He consider this duty, that He gave it a place in the first table of the Ten Commandments, and annexed a promise to it. And here let me call your attention to a fact that I fear is overlooked by many boys. The Bible commands you to “obey your parents,” and not merely your father. It tells you to keep the law of your mother, as well as the commandments of your father. You are under no more obligation to obey the one than the other ; or, if any distinction is made, it should be in favor of your mother, whose watchful and tender care over you has laid you under the heaviest obligations that one human being can impose upon another.

Among the Indians instructed by the good Mr. Eliot in religious things, there was a boy of fifteen, who, on one occasion, so far forget the teachings of

the missionary as to get drunk ; and while in this state, he was disobedient to his mother. The next time he was called upon to say the catechism to Mr. Eliot, he was very reluctant to repeat the fifth commandment ; and when at length urged to do so, he obstinately refused to say the word “ mother ” in its proper place.

My young friend, can *you* say the fifth commandment — the *whole* of it — with a clear conscience ?

XVI.

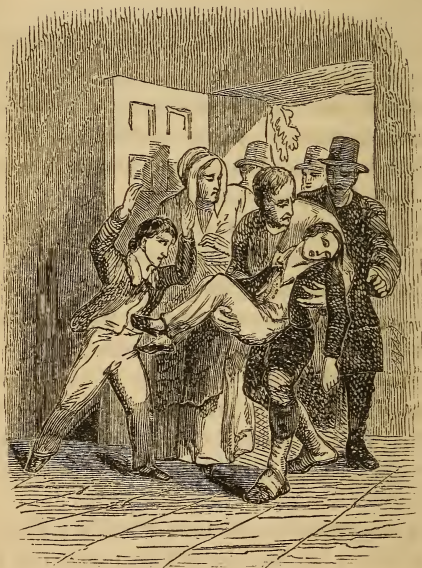
CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE.

SOME of the consequences of disobedience are particularly worthy of your notice, and if I can induce you to think of them, candidly and seriously, I shall have done you a good service.

One consequence of disobedience that ought to be taken into account, is this : it often results in immediate loss or suffering to the guilty party. The young sometimes think the commands of their parents and teachers unnecessary and unreasonable ; but let them disobey, and they find, when it is too late to remedy the matter, that they have sadly burned their own fingers. I have no doubt that many of my young readers will testify from their own experience that this is so.

Not many months ago, there lived in a New England village a boy fourteen or fifteen years old, whom we will call Samuel. He was an interesting and intelligent youth, and in many respects was a good boy. He was a constant attendant of the Sabbath school, and had enjoyed the prayers and instruction

of Christian parents. One afternoon, while alone in his father's shop, he attempted to load a pistol which he had borrowed from another boy ; and while pounding down the charge, the cap exploded, and



the ramrod passed entirely through his head. He was borne to his home by his afflicted friends, and after lingering a few hours, in an unconscious state,

he expired. One circumstance rendered this casualty doubly distressing to the friends of Samuel—it was the result of disobedience. He had been strictly forbidden to play with powder or fire-arms, and he died, like many a boy before him, the victim of his own disobedience.

Another common result of filial disobedience is this—it may furnish you with abundant cause for repentance hereafter. If you wish to plant thorns in your pillow that shall sting you through life, you can hardly do so more effectually than by habitually wounding the gentle heart of an affectionate mother, or by requiting a devoted father's love and care by ingratitude and disobedience. It may seem a small matter now, but ten or twenty years hence, when that father and mother are in their graves, your unfilial conduct will come up in your remembrance, and you will feel the full meaning of the lines which perhaps your mother taught you in childhood :

“ And now I recollect with pain
The many a time I grieved her sore ;
O, if she would but come again,
I think I'd vex her so no more !
How I would watch her gentle eye !
'Twould be my play to do her will !
And she should never have to sigh
Again, for my behaving ill.”

Another evil effect of disobedience to which I must refer, is this—it is the foundation of innumerable other vices. Let there be an end of obedience, and there is an end of all virtue. The barriers of the heart are thrown down, and evil influences of every kind may enter and operate without hindrance. There is but a step, and a very natural one too, from disobeying the laws of the family, and setting at naught the laws of God and of human governments.

Boys, you may think this a dry and a worn-out subject, but it is one that intimately concerns your peace. From the last report of the Massachusetts Reform School, I learn that of the 986 boys sent to that institution, 395, or about 40 per cent., were committed for *stubbornness*, or habitual disobedience of parents. Of those who were committed for other vices and offences, a very large proportion must have commenced their downward career by disobedience.—You may find a lesson and a warning in such facts as these.

XVII.

THE MIND.

WHEN I was quite young, I used frequently to see a very singular and mysterious being, whose appearance was both a curiosity and a puzzle to me. He appeared to be a half-grown boy, older than myself; but he did not go to school, like other boys, nor ever play out-doors with them. Whenever I saw him, he was in the house, seated in a high arm-chair, and tied in, to prevent his falling out. He did not smile, and his countenance never expressed any emotion, but was always the seat of a blank, unmeaning stare. He could not even talk, but only made inarticulate noises, like an infant. He was a very disagreeable object to look at, and I was always careful not to approach within reach of his arms, for I did not know what mischief he might do.

This unfortunate being, as you have already suspected, was an *idiot*. That which causes you, my young reader, to differ from him, is your mind, or

understanding. Without the intellect which God has bestowed upon you, you would be as wretched and as pitiable an object as he was. How precious the gift of reason ! How grateful should you be to the Giver of all, for this crowning mercy, without which you would be more helpless and miserable than the beasts that perish.

But something more than gratitude is demanded of you. Your mind is like the talents which the man in the parable gave to his servants. You must not only preserve it carefully, but God expects you to enlarge and increase its powers. These powers are now comparatively feeble ; but if you improve your mind as God designed you should, the one talent will in due time increase to ten talents, and your reward will be in proportion.

Youth is the most favorable period of life for commencing this work of improvement. Indeed, if it is not commenced in early life, there is little hope that it ever will be attended to. We learn easier in childhood than we do in after life, and if this favorable seed-time of knowledge is neglected, it is almost impossible ever to atone for the neglect. The farmer who sows his fields too late in the spring, will have a weak and scanty harvest. So the boy who allows his mind to run to weeds now, may, when he becomes a man, discover his mistake ; but, even with extra pains and diligence, he will not then be

able to make good the time and opportunities he has wasted. He has missed the "first train" of mental culture, and must lag behind through the whole journey of life, forever chasing, but never overtaking, his lost privileges.

You, my young friends, have not yet passed this favored period of life. You are still in the midst of it, or perhaps are just entering upon it. But are you improving it aright? Are you storing your minds with knowledge, and learning to think for yourselves? Are you making the most of your schools, and books, and papers? Have you ever thought how much money the country is expending, that you may enjoy these educational privileges — privileges that are enjoyed in no other land so liberally as they are with us? If you have ever thought much about these things, I am sure you will not throw away the golden opportunities now within your grasp. Too many lads neglect them, but they do it ignorantly, and thoughtlessly. They know not what they do.

I once knew a man who had been very prosperous in business, and who, at first thought, seemed to lack nothing that was necessary to secure the respect of the community. He was a man of sound judgment, and of excellent natural powers of mind. He dwelt in a fine mansion, and possessed an ample fortune. He owned a noble library, and his associates were men

of education and influence. But there was one little worm at the root of his happiness — he never could go into the presence of cultivated people, without feeling mortified at his own ignorance ; for though he was a sensible and intelligent man, his early education had been neglected, and from childhood he had been accustomed to use incorrect language and to spell badly. He tried hard to subdue these old habits, and would probably have given half his fortune to remedy these deficiencies of his early years, but it could not be done.

This same neglect of early opportunities has doomed many a man to a life of severe drudgery and poverty, as well as ignorance. Ignorant labor is the poorest paid of all labor, and has the fewest chances to rise in the scale of social life. The man who cannot read and write, may answer to carry a brick-hod or to shovel gravel for a new railroad, but almost every desirable avenue to wealth and usefulness is closed to him. He is fit only to be “a hewer of wood and a drawer of water ;” and you, my young friends, will be but little better off, when you become men, if you allow your minds to be buried up in rubbish now. “Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction.”

XVIII.

HOW TO LEARN.

I HAVE heard of a teacher who told his scholars at the commencement of his school, that he should give them only one rule, and that was as follows : —

“Let every scholar mind his own business.”

That was an excellent as well as simple rule ; and if he succeeded in making his pupils obey it, I have no doubt they had a good school. “Let every scholar mind his own business.” What is his business ? It is not to stare idly about the room or out of the windows ; nor to scribble nonsense and draw caricatures upon his slate, when the teacher supposes he is cyphering ; nor to slip a story book in front of his geography or grammar, and make the master think he is studying, when he is reading a tale ; nor to watch every movement of the teacher’s eye, to catch a chance to whisper to a neighbor, or to have a bit of fun. These are not the objects for which he is sent to school. His business is *to study* ; and if he attends to this and this alone, he cannot help learning.

If any of you want to know “how to learn,” here is the secret — *steady, persevering application* ; for this is the sum and substance of the rule referred to above. When you play, play ; but when you sit down to study, let play and everything else go, and apply yourself steadily and diligently to the business before you. The hardest lesson will soon grow easy, under such an attack as this, and the most alarming difficulties will melt away before it. It is hard work to learn, when one gives only half his mind to his lessons ; much harder than when the scholar takes hold of his studies in good earnest.

You all have seen how the little instrument, known among boys as the burning-glass, collects the rays of the sun, and sets on fire the tinder or dry wood. You cannot accomplish the feat in a moment. You must hold the glass steadily and patiently, and the focus must fall continually upon the same spot. At first there is but a slight heat ; but by-and-by a little smoke is seen, and at length the object is set on fire. This is the way in which the mind must be applied to any subject it would master ; and this is the way in which all great thinkers are accustomed to study. Sir Isaac Newton, who made many important discoveries in natural science, tells us that when he wished to master any subject, he was wont to fix his attention quietly but steadily upon it. Gradually, he says, night would grow out of darkness, and order out of

confusion, until the subject unfolded itself to his mind. It was this simple and patient application of the great philosopher, that led to the discoveries he made in regard to light, gravitation, &c.

The rule I have given you applies to your Sabbath school as well as week-day lessons, and to your studies at home as well as in the school-room. Whatever and wherever you attempt to study, address yourself in earnest to the business before you, and you will conquer every difficulty. The habit once formed, study will no longer be the dry and tedious thing it is to many boys. The better acquainted you become with your lessons, the more you will like them. The reason why they are ever hateful, is because you do not know them. There is great satisfaction in feeling assured that we know more to-day than we knew yesterday; and this satisfaction is continually enjoyed by the studious boy.

This habit of application will be very useful to you through life. Your days of study will not be over, when you leave school. There are a great many things to be learned, besides those that are taught in books. Life itself is a long school-term. Should you reach the age of four-score years, I do not believe you will ever see the day when you can say, "My education is finished, I do not wish to learn any thing more." So far from this, the wiser you

grow, the more sensible you will be of the narrow limits of your knowledge ; like the philosopher Newton, above alluded to, who in his old age seemed to himself like one who had only picked up a few pebbles on the shore of a boundless ocean. Now if you expect to learn as long as you live, this habit of application must be early acquired. Nothing great or important can be accomplished without it. You can no more excel in any branch of business without it, than you can now excel in school, if you do not give your mind to your studies. We read in the Bible that when Hezekiah undertook any work, "he did it *with all his heart*, and prospered." That is the way to study, as well as to work ; do it with a right good will — apply your mind as steadily and patiently to the lesson before you as a boy does the burning-glass to the object he wishes to set on fire, and you must succeed.

I will now sum up what I have to say on this subject, in a few brief

RULES FOR SCHOOLBOYS.

1. Determine to make the most of your school privileges. Though free to you, they cost a great deal of money, and should be valued accordingly. Your school days will soon be over, and if misim-

proved, they will be lost forever. We have known a good many people to lament that they did not profit more by their school privileges, but we never heard of a man who was sorry that he made a good use of them.

2. Rivet your attention upon whatever you undertake to learn. Don't allow your thoughts to wander to the ends of the earth, while you are in the school-room. Apply your mind closely to your lessons, and the task will become easy.

3. Be sure that you understand what you undertake to learn. Committing things to memory is not learning. A parrot can do that. To "say a lesson by heart" is one thing; to be able to explain it, and apply it, is another.

4. Be more anxious to go thoroughly, than to "go ahead," with your studies. One single thing which we *know* we know, is worth a dozen that we *think* we know.

5. Believe that you can learn what you set out to learn. "I can" and "I will" do wonders, but "I can't" never accomplished any thing yet.

6. Be as punctual and regular in your attendance as possible, and don't whisper during school hours. The three greatest sources of trouble in our schools are, — unnecessary absence, tardiness, and whispering.

7. Treat your teacher with kindness and respect. Co-operate with him in his efforts to sustain good order. Remember the rules of the school are designed for your good, and give them your prompt and cheerful obedience.

XIX.

SELF-CHEATING.

STRANGE as it may sound, people sometimes cheat themselves very badly. Those who do this ridiculous thing, it is true, are not generally considered very bright. But this is not the worst thing that can be said about them. Those folks who cheat themselves, almost always do it while under the impression that they are cheating somebody else. They are not honest, and in seeking to take advantage of other people, they often defraud themselves.

Some of the most remarkable cases of self-cheating that I have ever noticed, occurred among school-boys. Indeed, I suspect that it is a very common thing for lads to cheat themselves. Let me tell you how some of them do it.

The boy who “plays truant” when sent to school, is cheating himself. He thinks he is cheating his parents and teacher, but he is mistaken. He may deceive and impose upon them, but the fraud he com-

mits is upon himself. Others may regret his course, but after all he is himself the principal loser.

In one of our Northern cities, there lived a boy of ten years, who had no father. His mother was poor, and as she had to go out to work every day, to support her four children, she was of course away from home most of the time. Her son, whom we will call John, took advantage of this absence, and seldom went to school, although his mother always sent him. After awhile, his teacher and mother discovered his truancy, and used every means they could think of to make him go to school, but in vain. At length an agent of the "Juvenile Reform Society" heard of his case, and became interested in his welfare. He reasoned with the truant, but without effect; and it was not until he told John that he must choose between going to school or going to the House of Refuge, that the misguided boy promised to reform. He did reform, for a little while, but soon fell back into his old habits. But the gentleman did not give him up. He took him one day to walk. They went among the stores, and banks, and work-shops, and he told John that the men and boys employed there were all intellectual and educated. There was no chance there for lads who would not go to school. Then they walked to a place where a gang of laborers were hard at work, with pick and shovel, building a railroad. The gentleman contrasted this kind of work

with the business of the mechanic and merchant, and asked John which he should prefer. The little truant's eyes were now opened. He saw that he was cheating himself. He declared that he would not use a pick-axe in the hot sun, but would be off to school, and qualify himself for something better. He kept his promise, and became one of the best scholars in school. If he perseveres, instead of a vagrant he will probably become a respectable and useful man.

If the truant from school cheats himself, it follows that all those devices which pupils adopt to escape the regular duties of the school-room, are only so many methods of self-cheating.

Some idle away the hours which should be devoted to study, and think they have escaped a disagreeable task — but they are only cheating themselves.

Some, as I have before intimated, read stories or draw upon their slates, when their teacher supposes they are studying their lessons — but they, too, are only cheating themselves.

Some peep into their books during recitation, or allow their mates to prompt them — and thus they cheat themselves.

Some get their friends to work out the more difficult problems for them, and thus escape the effort they would demand — but they sorely cheat themselves.

Some pass off, as their own compositions, produc-

tions which they never wrote, and think themselves lucky — but they, too, have defrauded no one but themselves.

Some members of the Sabbath school seldom or never study their lessons at home. The consequence is, they feel little interest in their teacher's instruction, and derive little benefit from it — and thus they are cheating themselves.

All these classes of pupils imagine that they have gained an advantage, of some sort or other, whenever they manage to evade a lesson. But ere long, they will discover that they are woefully mistaken. Not only have they gained nothing, but they have shamefully wronged and abused themselves. They have thrown away — not silver and gold — but the golden years of youth, that were given for study and improvement. They have defrauded themselves out of the spring-time of life, with its never-returning opportunities. They have cheated themselves out of one of the most precious privileges secured by our laws — the privilege of obtaining an education. O, how many, who have thus cheated themselves in childhood, have repented of their folly through all their after lives !

XX.

PURITY.

I HAVE read somewhere of a lad, who, when about going to sea, asked his mother what he should bring her home.

“My son,” said the good woman, “bring me back that *pure look* of thine.”

No mother, I am sure, could wish her absent son to bring home a better token of his love to her than this. But many lads lose not only their pure looks, but their pure hearts and their pure language, long before they emerge from boyhood to early manhood. The simplicity and innocence of childhood give place to loose thoughts, immodest manners, and impure conversation. There are many boys of this class in almost every community, and I wish to caution my young readers against mingling with them. You cannot go into their company without being injured by their influence and example. A polluting atmosphere hangs all around them. You had better associate with thieves, than with such boys as these ; for

it is a small matter to have one's pocket picked, compared with being robbed of one's virtue.

A very intimate friend of the late lamented Webster, in a tribute which he paid to his memory, said:

“I have known Mr. Webster in private circles, and in domestic life. I bear testimony here to-day, that though I have received multitudes of letters from him, which I now have, and many that have been destroyed by his order, written in the most confidential and friendly manner; though I have had the pleasure of meeting him on many occasions, and at the festal board often, where our sittings were long, I bear testimony that never in my life did I hear an impure thought or a profane expression come from the lips of Daniel Webster. I further bear testimony, that never in my life have I known a man whose conversation was uniformly so unexceptionable in its tone, and uniformly so edifying in its character.”

Is not this an eulogy which any man might covet? And yet it is within the power of the humblest of us to compete even with Daniel Webster in this matter. It does not require talent, or education, or station, to do this; we have only to set a faithful watch over our hearts and tongues, and we shall be safe.

There are some habits which we can never entirely annihilate, after we have once formed them. The use of impure language is one of these habits. It

may be subdued and slumber for years, till its existence is almost forgotten ; and then, in the delirium of fever, it may suddenly burst forth to the astonishment of all who listen. Many a devoted Christian, in the delirium of a sick-bed, has shocked his friends by the use of profane or obscene language, which could be explained only by the fact that he had been familiar with such language in early life. In reading the memoir of Dr. Grant, the missionary to the Nestorians, I was struck with a fact relating to his last illness. For seventeen days previous to his death, he was in a delirium ; but, says his biographer, “ though speaking almost constantly on many topics, in three different languages, — that is, English, Turkish, and Syriac, — he did not utter a single word he would have been ashamed of afterwards. His associates listened to these disclosures of his secret heart, and wondered that nothing appeared that they would have wished to conceal.”

A poet has said,

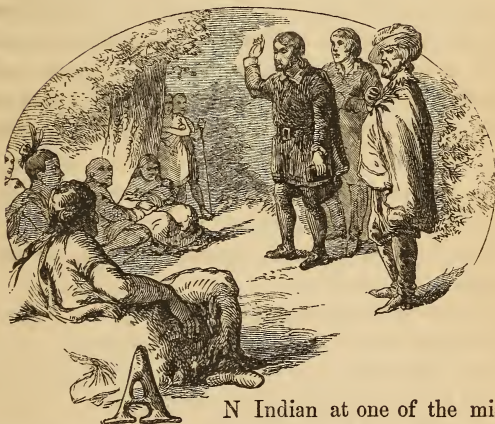
“ Immodest words admit of no defence,
For want of decency is want of sense.”

Impure language not only indicates a “ want of decency,” and a “ want of sense,” but it is the sign of a corrupt heart. “ Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Indeed, it is of

little use to try and reform the tongue unless the heart is set right. If we harbor impure thoughts, we shall be very likely to use impure language ; and even if we do not openly transgress, the sin will be scarcely less in the eye of God, who judges the heart, as well as the conduct. Our Saviour, in his sermon on the mount, said, “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Take this text as a motto, my young friends, and try to conform yourselves to it. See what a promise is appended to it ! “ *They* shall see God ; ” but what of the vile and impure ? O God, “ thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” The guilty cannot stand in Thy pure presence.

XXI.

LAZINESS.



AN Indian at one of the missionary stations, when asked to define original sin, replied that it was laziness. Though incorrect, the answer was not a bad one ; for laziness certainly is the parent of a terrible progeny of sin and misfortune. This tendency of idleness to run into vice and crime, was very strongly set forth by an eminent English

judge, who said, "If any one wishes to have his son hanged, let him bring him up in idleness." That is the way many a son has been ruined, as every one familiar with our courts and prisons will testify.

Among the "wants," advertised in the city daily newspapers, you will often see something like the following: — "Wanted — a smart, active boy," or, "an industrious boy," or "a boy who is willing to make himself useful to his employer." Such boys are always wanted. There are plenty of good places for them, in our counting-rooms, and stores, and workshops, and on our farms, where they may learn the arts and mysteries of business, and be fitted for an honorable and useful life. These are the boys, who, twenty years hence, are to be our leading mechanics, merchants, manufacturers and farmers. If they live, you may be sure they will make their mark in the world.

There are many boys, however, who do not exactly answer to the above advertised descriptions. Very clever lads they may be in other respects, and free from bad habits generally; but they are not smart, nor active, nor industrious, nor willing to make themselves useful. When at home, they idle away their time, while all the rest of the family are employed. They are not "handy" about the house, nor willing to assist in the out-door work of the family. So much do they dislike every thing that looks like work, that they even shun those active sports which

call the muscles into healthful play. These are not the boys that get good business situations, when they leave school ; or if they get them, they do not keep them long. The brisk, energetic trader cannot endure their shiftless habits, and the thrifty mechanic soon discovers that they are "more plague than profit." So, as soon as their character is discovered, they are dismissed, to go through the same short and unsuccessful probation with some other employer. Poor fellows ! they will soon find it is a serious matter to be afflicted with laziness.

Not long ago, a young man was sentenced to the Connecticut State Prison, for forging pension papers. He was an intelligent-looking man, and of fine personal appearance, being over six feet in height. As he was exchanging his own clothing for the striped suit which the convicts are compelled to wear, he remarked to the prison officer in attendance, that *he had never done a day's work in his life*. No wonder he brought up so soon at the State Prison. He could hardly have taken a surer path to that institution ; for it is one of the great evils of laziness that it leads to sin. No man is so severely tempted as the idler. He invites and coaxes temptation. He surrenders the key of his heart's citadel to Satan, and asks him to enter and take possession ; and you may be sure that Satan never declines such an invitation. By turning to Eze. 16 : 49, you will see that this was

one of the means by which he obtained such extraordinary power over the infamous city of Sodom.

Some of my young readers may think I am making too much of what they consider a slight fault, but it is not so. That which opens the door to Satan, and leaves the soul exposed to a host of temptations, cannot be an unimportant matter. You who are now forming habits for life, cannot guard yourselves too carefully from the danger I am pointing out.

“Eschew the idle vein,—
Flee, flee from doing nought;
For never was there idle brain,
But bred an idle thought.”

Another of the evils of laziness, is, that it leads to want. Solomon said, “An idle soul shall suffer hunger,” and we often see the proverb verified. Paul directed, “that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” The penalty certainly is just.

There is still another reason why we should shun the formation of lazy habits. The lazy man is a useless member of society. In this busy, stirring age, when so much is being done for the enlightenment and improvement of mankind, it is a greater disgrace to be an idle spectator than ever before. What an insignificantly small fraction of a man must he be, who settles himself down into the inactive life of a

vegetable, and allows his joints to rust out, and his muscles to shrink away from disuse, when there are such urgent calls and such noble inducements for labor! Be active and diligent, then, my young friends, and in due time God will give you all a work to do.

XXII.

USEFULNESS.

IN the preceding article, I cautioned you against falling into lazy habits. Smart boys, it was shown, are "at a premium." They are wanted by the farmer, the mechanic, the manufacturer, the merchant, and the shipmaster. You have thought the subject over, I hope, and have resolved to form such habits, that when you leave school, you need not be afraid to offer your services to the man who wants "an active, industrious boy, who is willing to make himself useful."

The boyhood of Dr. Grant, the excellent American missionary to the Nestorians, presents some points which every lad may study with profit. When quite a little boy, he began to think that he should like to become a physician, when he grew to be a man : and when about seven years old, unknown to the family, he had a drawer neatly fitted up as a miniature apothecary's shop, with money which he had saved. This shows that he was looking forward, even at that

early age, to a life of usefulness. But this did not prevent his attending to his school duties. "At ten years of age," says his biographer, "he might be seen poring over his books, while others played. Nor were these mere story books, but history and science were already his chosen themes." When he was fourteen or fifteen years old, his services were needed much of the time on the farm. His cherished hopes of being a physician did not seem likely to be realized ; but he did not allow this disappointment to prevent his being useful. He labored faithfully, devoting his leisure hours to his books. Many a volume he read fastened to the plough ; and at the "nooning," when others slept, he was reading. After a while, his services became so valuable at the homestead, that probably his father would never have consented to his leaving it, had not a severe wound from an axe in one of his feet so unfitted him for agricultural labor, that he was allowed to gratify his oft-repeated desire to study medicine.

There are several things in the character of this youth, worthy of your imitation. He early began to look forward to an active and useful life. Few of you, probably, will pitch upon a profession, while so young as he, for the majority of people do not manifest any strong natural preference for a particular calling in childhood. But though you do not set your hearts on any definite occupation, you should

even now begin to look ahead to a life of industry and usefulness. And, like him, you should begin to prepare for such a life, by making yourselves as useful as possible to your parents. The thousand little services which you can do about house, will be as valuable to yourselves, in aiding you to form active habits, as they will be useful to your parents, in lightening their burdens. There is one other thing worth noticing in the character of the little Grant boy—he did not neglect his books, because he was obliged to work. Some boys hate to study more than they do to work, and will submit to the latter, for the sake of getting rid of the former. This lad, you perceive, was not one of these; and now, judging from these traits in his youthful character, do you think it strange that in after years he became an industrious and intelligent man, and a faithful and devoted missionary?

In your efforts to make yourselves useful, there are three little rules that you will find very important. One is, to do *cheerfully* whatever labor you undertake to perform. The sour, scowling, fretful and unwilling worker is but little if any better than the shiftless idler. The labor which he accomplishes is seldom well done, and his efforts go to confirm a habit of ill-nature, and not of industry. So neither himself nor anybody else is benefited by the tasks he performs.

The second rule is, to do *promptly* whatever you

undertake. When asked to do a thing, do it immediately, and not by-and-bye, unless it is of such a nature as not to admit of immediate attention. You have read of the Bible character who said, in reply to a command, "I go sir," but went not. I have known many youth who resembled him. They intended to do a good many things that were never really done, for the simple reason that they did not do them promptly. Remember, then, that one job *done now*, is better than a good many that you are *going to do*, by-and-bye.

The last rule I shall give you now, is to do *faithfully* whatever work you take in hand. Do not suppose that your work is unimportant, and that you may for this reason, slight it. If it is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. Besides, if the work itself were not very important, it *is* of great importance that you should not form the habit of half doing what you take in hand. He that is unfaithful in small matters, will be unfaithful in great ones.

XXIII.

DEPARTMENT.

You have heard a great deal of the wonderful progress the world has made, during the last fifty years. When we think of our railroads and steamboats, our noble ships and beautiful buildings, our innumerable labor-saving machines and vast factories, we almost pity those who lived before us, and wonder and smile at their ignorance. "What would our forefathers say, if they could come to life now?" we often boastfully ask. No doubt they would be astonished; but I am afraid their astonishment would not always be very complimentary to their descendants. They would, I fear, discover some changes which neither they nor we could pretend were improvements. One thing that would attract their notice, I think, would be the *manners of the young*. Most people who have lived fifty years, agree that the children of the present day are not quite so civil, and respectful, and obedient, as the children of *their* young days. They tell us that the young are now

more rude, and forward, and pert, than they used to be. Old people are perhaps rather apt to think the world is growing worse and worse ; but in this instance, I am afraid they are more than half right. The young do not manifest that respect towards their elders, in some parts of our country at least, which used to be considered just and proper.

I noticed a group of small boys, the other day, who were sliding on the ice by the side of the road. One of them happened to look up, and noticing a woman passing along the street, he cried out, so loud that she could not help hearing, "Hullo, you Paddy woman!" The woman, — who, by the way, was of respectable appearance, — took no notice of this unprovoked and impudent salutation ; but as I passed along, I heard one of the lad's playmates say to him, "Why, Jimmy! I should think you would be ashamed to speak so." Perhaps "Jimmy" did feel a little ashamed of himself, when he came to think the matter over. As a citizen of the same town, I could not help feeling ashamed of his conduct ; but I also felt proud of the manly little fellow who rebuked his ill manners.

You can hardly give a boy a worse name than to say he is ill-bred, saucy and impudent. Everybody avoids such a boy, as much as possible. Sensible people are annoyed by his impertinence, and give him "a wide berth." They regard him very much as

they do the musquito—a pert and ill-mannered intruder, whose littleness alone saves him from the doom which his attacks deserve. Some boys have their ill-manners so plainly stamped upon their faces, that you may know them as far as you can see them. The bold stare, the impudent leer, and the brazen air of assurance, tell us their characters very plainly, before they have opened their mouths. There is something very repulsive in all this, and I am glad that I can say that this lowest and worst development of a bad habit is not common.

If full-bloomed impudence is so unlovely a flower, it is certainly worth your while to avoid with care whatever would tend to aid its growth. The habit, like all others, is formed slowly and by degrees. It usually commences with rudeness and incivility towards parents. The boy begins, perhaps, by replying with a blunt *yes* or *no* to the questions of his parents; or by contradicting them, or “answering back,” when rebuked for a fault. He soon grows disrespectful towards his teacher, and finally comes to treat his elders generally as though they were no older, wiser or better than himself. You see, therefore, the importance of nipping this fault in the bud.

The rule of good manners may be thus stated:

To your elders and superiors, be respectful.

To your equals, be civil.

To your inferiors, be kind and considerate.

To all, be courteous.

“Be courteous” is one of the commands of the Bible, and it is therefore a Christian duty. A polite and gentlemanly deportment may be easily acquired in youth, and will prove of great advantage to you through life. It will gain you valuable friends, and admit you into the society of the wise and good. But it should spring from real kindness of heart, and not be a mere empty pretence. See, then, that you cherish kindly feelings towards others, for a show of respect, without these, would be but a mockery and a sham.

And now one word for “Jimmy,” before I close. I do not know as he will ever see this book ; but if it should happen to fall into his hands, I would advise him, in case he does not reform his manners, to reserve his impudent language hereafter for rich and well-dressed people. *They* would care very little for his impertinent remarks ; but to hoot after the poor and unfortunate, the foreigner and the negro, the aged and decrepit, is quite another thing. It is what an old writer quaintly calls “beating a cripple with his crutches.” It is mean and cruel, and I hope “Jimmy” has enough manliness left to follow my advice, and never do so again.

XXIV.

TOBACCO.

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO A BOY WHO SMOKED.

DEAR HENRY :— Perhaps you will be surprised when I tell you that I am going to address this long letter particularly to yourself. And it may be, you will be still more astonished to find it printed in a book where thousands of other boys may read it. Well, let them read it, I say. It may be of some benefit to them, as well as to yourself; and as I know you are not a selfish boy, I guess you will not object to having it published.

“ But,” I hear you say, “ why do you direct the letter to me? — and about *tobacco*, too ! ”

Well, Henry, I will tell you why. There is a certain lad whom I often meet in the street, and whose countenance and bearing have very favorably impressed me. Although I actually knew little about his character, I somehow got the idea that he was a very promising boy. He seemed to be intelligent, civil, obliging, and neat, and his appearance was on the

whole quite prepossessing. "He will make a good man," I have often thought, "and his parents have already cause to be proud of him." But how do you suppose I felt, when, a few days ago, I met this same fine lad with a cigar in his mouth! Why, the shock was no slight affair, I can assure you. It was as if a freezing blast from the north pole had blown in upon me in the middle of a sweltering summer day. That boy, who in imagination I had registered at "A, 1," as the underwriters say, suddenly went down to — I hardly dare tell you what. It was certainly "below par," to use another mercantile phrase. After thinking over the matter a little, I determined to write him a letter about it. This is the letter, and *you are the boy!*

"But," I hear you ask, "suppose you did see me smoking a cigar, was there any crime in that? Don't many good men smoke, and is anybody shocked because they do?"

Yes, I am sorry to say that some good men do use tobacco; but they acquired the taste for it in their youth, and now it is almost impossible for them to do without it. I do not believe, however, that they would like to have their sons imitate them, in this respect; and if you should ask their advice, I am pretty sure they would tell you by all means to avoid forming a taste for the poisonous article. So you cannot make much out of their bad example.

And now I will tell you why I was shocked, at the sight of that cigar in your mouth. It was not because it is a crime to smoke. I will not venture to say that it is a sin to use tobacco, under any circumstances. But this I do say, that the use of tobacco in any form, by the young, is a very *bad sign*. Suppose all the idle, vicious, and dissolute young men of a certain town should adopt some peculiar article of dress — say a hat of an odd and unusual style. I should call that a rowdy hat, and when I saw a youth adopting it, I should say it was a bad sign, even if I knew nothing of his character. So the cigar is everywhere the badge of the rowdy. It is the inseparable companion of the grog-shop and the gambling-saloon ; and wherever the vicious gather together, there you will find the smoke of the cigar, and the filthy spittle of the tobacco chewer. The use of tobacco is, indeed, one of the bad habits which such characters almost invariably acquire ; and every youth who forms this habit, so far puts himself on a level with the rowdy and the loafer.

Then, again, do you not know that smoking and chewing often directly lead to more vicious practices ? They not only frequently lead the young into bad company, and put them in the way of temptation, but it is their nature to create a thirst for intoxicating liquors. If used constantly, they deaden the taste, so that water, milk, and even tea and coffee, become

insipid, and the appetite craves something stronger and more stimulating. I have no doubt that tobacco has thus led many a young man into drunkenness, and from drunkenness to crime.

Tobacco is a powerful poison, and all medical writers agree that its effects upon the body are pernicious. But I have not room to take up this point. If you wish to learn more of its poisonous nature, you can find books on the subject in almost any library or bookstore.

And now, before I conclude this letter, let me assure you that I am not the only one who regards a cigar in the mouth of a boy as a bad sign. Almost everybody looks upon it in this light; and if I could have you by my side a few minutes, I think I could make you yourself confess that it is a bad sign. Would you go to the merchant or mechanic with a cigar in your mouth, to apply for a situation? Or suppose a cigar or piece of tobacco should roll out from your cap, as you took it off, or peep out suspiciously from your pocket, as you sat down to talk with the merchant or mechanic, — should you expect your application would be favorably received, after that? No, you know very well that all your letters of recommendation would avail you nothing, if such a palpable letter of disparagement should unluckily show itself; and I venture to predict that you would carefully empty your mouth and pockets of the vile

poison, if you were going into the presence of one whose favor and good opinion you wished to obtain. And is not this confessing that the use of tobacco is a bad sign ? So, at least, it seems to

Your friend,

UNCLE WILLIAM.

XXV.

S W E A R I N G.

THERE are few things, my young friends, that grate more harshly on the ears of thoughtful and sensitive people, than profane language, especially when it proceeds from the mouth of childhood or youth. Unlike most other vices, this does not yield even a temporary gratification, and is of no possible advantage to those who embrace it. It is a sort of extra offering to the devil, for which not even the semblance of a return is made. In other words, it is “serving the devil for nothing.”

Then why do men swear? Because they form the habit in youth, and it is very difficult to get rid of it. And why do boys swear? Because they hear men and their own young associates use profane language, and are led to imitate them without thinking much about the matter. If they could only be persuaded to reflect a little upon this subject—if they would think how insulting it is to God, and how offensive it is to all who are not themselves guilty of the practice,

and how vulgar, foolish and unnecessary it is — there is little doubt that they would form a resolution to avoid this bad habit. There are many lads who *have* formed this resolution, and I hope all who read these pages will be induced to join themselves to the number.

When I hear a boy swear, I need not ask what kind of company he keeps. Profaneness is not learned among the good. It is the badge of vulgarity and vice, and is almost invariably accompanied with other bad traits. It is, in fact, almost an universal habit among the vicious. The Chaplain of the Massachusetts Reform School has ascertained, that of the 986 boys sentenced to that institution, up to the date of the last annual report, 872 had been addicted to profanity. These lads, it should be remembered, were not committed to the Reform School for profaneness, but for other offences. It would appear, from this, that *eight-ninths* of the boys who fall into criminal habits, are profane swearers. No wonder that Howard, the English philanthropist, used to button up his pocket, when he heard a person swear, on the ground "that any one who can take God's name in vain, can also steal, or do any thing else that is bad."

It is a very bad sign, when a person says, "I don't care what people think about me." When one becomes indifferent to the good opinion of others,

especially of the pure and upright, the way is prepared for his rapid progress down hill. This disrespect for the opinions of others, is a marked feature in the character of the swearer. He knows that every oath he utters, sinks him in the eyes of the virtuous ; and yet he grows more and more indifferent to this consideration, until at length he cares very little about it.

The swearer not only suffers in the good opinion of others, but he makes himself a positive annoyance to them. To a pure ear, as before remarked, there are few things more unpleasant than to be obliged to listen to a torrent of profane oaths ; but this is a very common annoyance in cars, coaches, steamboats, and other public places. I have heard of a young naval officer who was travelling in the cars, and freely intermingling his conversation with profanity, when a young lady seated near him, inquired if he could converse in Hebrew. On his replying that he could, she politely told him that he would greatly oblige her, and probably most of the passengers, if he would do the rest of his swearing in that language. The reproof took effect. If swearers generally knew how their disgusting and often blasphemous language grates upon the ears of those who are not addicted to the vice, they would cease from the habit, if they were not entirely lost to a sense of decency and self-respect.

But the most serious objection to profane swearing, is, that it is a sin against God. In one of its most common forms, it is a direct violation of the third commandment ; and in every other possible form, it is forbidden by the New Testament. I need not quote texts in proof of this, for you are all familiar with them.

I have lately read of a mother, who cured her little son of swearing by washing out his mouth with soap and water, every time she heard him utter an oath. If there was somebody to perform this service for every boy that swears, the effect would doubtless be good. But there is a moral defilement in this habit, which soap and water cannot cleanse, nor parental affection wash away. These may cure the young swearer of his vice ; but God alone can wipe out the stain left upon the soul by profane words.

XXVI.

GUNNING.

My young friends, are you fond of gunning?

“O yes,” I hear some lad reply: “I like *that* fun first-rate. I’ve got a gun of my own, and I can bring down a bird on the wing, three times out of four. It’s capital sport—don’t you think so?”

Well, that is just what I wish to talk with you about. As I sit at my study window, near the edge of a large tract of woodland, I often see boys pass by, with guns on their shoulders, going in quest of game; and occasionally the sharp crack of their muskets reaches my ear, reminding me of the nature of the sport in which they are engaged. Then, again, I once in a while look up into the branches of the tall cedar which shades my window, and catch a little troop of birds in the act of peeping slyly into my premises, or skipping and hopping among the branches, and twittering as fast as they can, as if they meant to attract my notice. What they mean by this, I do not exactly know; but I have sometimes

imagined that possibly they might be a delegation of my feathered friends, sent to request me to intercede in their behalf with the boys whom I may address through these pages. Whether this surmise is correct or not, I think I ought to take up their cause, and give you my opinion of gunning; and here it is, in a very few words:

Gunning for amusement, as ordinarily practised by boys, is dangerous, cruel, and of immoral tendency.

It seems to me that any unprejudiced person, who carefully considers the subject, will arrive at this opinion. Set down your gun, my sharp-shooting friend, you who just asked my opinion of the sport, and let us reason a little about the matter. In the first place, I say it is a *dangerous* amusement.

“No danger if you’re only careful — I never got hurt yet,” you say.

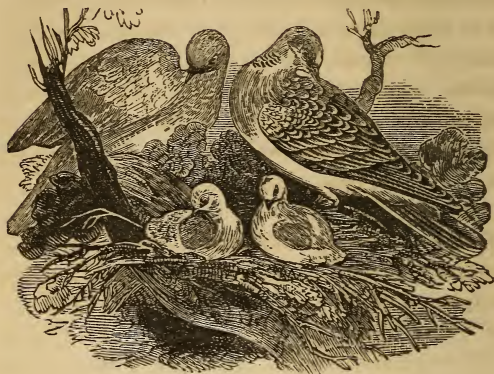
Well, were it not for that “if,” there might be something in your argument; but as it is a notorious fact that boys are *not* careful, no answer is necessary. Almost every newspaper we take up, records one or more deaths from the careless use of fire-arms; and in most cases, the victims are boys or young men. A gentleman of Brooklyn, N. Y., E. Meriam, Esq., kept a record for a period of a little more than two years, of all the accidents of this kind which came to his knowledge. In communicating the facts to the

Portsmouth Journal, in March, 1854, he says, during the period embraced, “ 105 persons have been killed, either by their own hands, or by their sporting companions, while engaged in the wicked practice of hunting harmless wild animals and birds, to wound or kill them, and besides these, 32 persons have been wounded while engaged in the same cruel sport.

“ The catalogue embraces, probably, but a small portion of the killed and wounded within the same period—it contains only such as we have met with accounts of in the newspapers within the field of our research, and very far outnumbers the deaths by lightning recorded by us during the same term of time, within the same field of research.”

Could a full record be made of all the boys who have been killed or mutilated for life by fire-arms, even within one year, what a sad story would it tell. And is there no danger in gunning?

I have said it is a *cruel* amusement. Its object is, to destroy the lives of some of the most harmless, defenceless, and beautiful creatures that God has made. It mangles and mutilates the sweet warblers who confidingly build their nests around our dwellings, and pay their rent with their delightful songs. It wantonly murders the parent bird, leaving its mate to pine in grief, or its little ones to starve. It destroys many birds that are not only harmless, but positively useful to the farmer. It also inflicts need-



less suffering and death upon the innocent and frolicsome squirrel tribe, and upon the other harmless and happy four-footed inhabitants of the forest. All this is cruel; and He without whose notice not even a sparrow falls to the ground, will assuredly hear the cry of these poor victims of barbarous sport.

I have alluded to the *immoral tendency* of shooting birds, &c., for amusement. I mean by this, that it hardens the heart, and fosters a cruel disposition. The boy who can find amusement in wounding or slaying innocent birds, has already laid the foundation for a cruel, vindictive temper. Nero commenced his infamous career of cruelty by tormenting animals. Those who addict themselves to the sport in question,

also violate the whole spirit of Christianity, which is one of kindness and gentleness. Besides this, they usually put themselves under bad influences. The idle and dissolute are more addicted to such pursuits than any other class, and are too apt to be the tutors and associates of boys who seek amusement with the gun. Is it not clear, then, that the tendency of such sports is evil?

Such is my opinion of gunning. I hope, my young friends, you will think the matter over, and be led to the same opinion.

XXVII.

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

AMONG the objections I brought against gunning was its cruelty. I am afraid that to some lads this objection will not have quite so much force as it ought to have. Cruelty to animals is a sin that many seem to regard as a very trifling matter. Even children sometimes take delight in torturing weak and defenceless creatures. This probably arises from thoughtlessness, in most cases ; and the proper remedy of the evil, therefore, is to show them the real nature and consequences of such conduct.

You believe that God made you to be happy, and that he would be greatly offended with any one who should purposely destroy your life, or inflict needless suffering upon you. The same good Being who made you, also created all these tribes of inferior animals ; and we have good reason to believe that he desires their happiness. He has given them capacities for enjoyment, and has provided each particular race with the means of gratifying its natural tastes and instincts. He has, indeed made them subject to

man ; and this confers upon us the right to slay such as are necessary for food, or to supply our other wants ; to train such to labor, as are fitted to this



kind of service ; and to destroy such as are injurious or dangerous to ourselves. But it does *not* confer upon us the right to inflict unnecessary suffering upon a brute, or to take, its life in sport ; and there can be no doubt that God is displeased with those who are guilty of these practices.

Many of the animals that suffer most from the cruelty of man, are useful, affectionate and faithful ser-

wants to him, and are therefore peculiarly entitled to kind treatment. Some of them may almost be called his benefactors ; such, for instance, as the noble horse, the most useful and docile of domestic animals ; the strong and patient ox, whose iron sinews are so willingly devoted to the service of man ; the gentle cow, whose milk is so necessary to our comfort ; the faithful and devoted dog, who would not hesitate to sacrifice his own life, to defend his master from harm ; and even the bird, who confers an incalculable but too often unappreciated benefit upon the farmer, by destroying insects that would otherwise make sad depredations on his crops. How ungenerous, how mean, to inflict needless pain upon such faithful friends, and to take their life without a satisfactory reason ! The name of tyrant and oppressor is odious to every noble heart ; but how often do we see the very spirit of Nero manifested towards weak and defenceless brutes, by those who would scorn to be thought unjust or oppressive !

Every act of cruelty towards an animal, tends to harden the heart, and to blunt its nice sensibilities. A habit of cruelty is very easily formed ; and when a boy has arrived at such a state that he can destroy innocent and gladsome life in sport, or beat and abuse without cause the domestic animals he dare not kill, nothing is more natural than that he should extend the same treatment to his weaker playmate.

Where occasional acts of cruelty do not result in this settled habit, they often leave behind a sting which time can never wholly remove. A boy once shot a robin with an arrow, breaking both her legs. The poor bird fluttered for a moment, then slowly arose from the ground, and flew heavily towards her forest home, her legs dangling in the air, and her beak still grasping the food which she had collected for her nestlings. As the boy gazed at this sight, and imagined the mournful scene that would be presented, when the wounded bird returned to its late happy nest, his conscience smote him, and he sadly turned his steps homeward. He disposed of his bow and arrow, and many years afterward declared that he could never think of this deed, without feeling the pangs of that cruel arrow in his own bosom.

I have given three reasons, you perceive, against the cruel treatment of animals. The first is, that it is a sin against God ; the second, that it is mean and ungenerous ; and the third, that it either tends to harden and degrade those who are guilty of it, or will be remembered with regret in after life.

In Norway, the people have a beautiful custom of treating the birds to a nice feast, every Christmas day. On the morning of that day, every gable, gateway, and barn-door is decorated with a sheaf of corn fixed on the top of a tall pole ; and it is said that the carolings of the birds about these offerings is a

very pleasant sight. The Arab chief would consider his high-mettled horse degraded, were he once to have submitted to the whip ; and examples have been known where the breeders of this noble race of steeds, have refused to sell a favorite animal, unless the buyer would consent to bind himself by the most solemn oath that the creature should never be made to feel either blow or spur. Let us try to manifest something of this spirit, in our treatment of the inferior animals. Who of you will not respond a hearty *aye* to this proposal ?

XXVIII.

A CRUEL SPIRIT.

SPEAKING of “kindness to animals,” reminds me that there is another species of cruelty, concerning which I wish now to make a few remarks. I mean, cruelty towards associates and friends — a mean and wicked spirit, which, I am sorry to say, is quite too common among boys as well as men.

This spirit manifests itself in various ways. It sometimes, for example, leads boys to inflict cruel injuries upon their fellows, in fits of anger or revenge. An instance of this kind occurred in Dorchester, a few months since, and was widely noticed in the newspapers. A boy fifteen years old persuaded a younger lad to go to ride with him, and treated him in a most friendly manner, for a while. At length, however, when they reached an unfrequented road, the older boy, with the aid of an accomplice whom he had secured, bound the other lad, hand and foot, and stopped his mouth with a handkerchief. They then led him to a thicket, where the older boy reminded

him of an old grudge, arising from a difference at school, a year previous, and told him that he was now going to whip him till the blood ran down to the ground. They then lashed him to a tree, and, although the weather was cold, stripped him entirely naked, and were about to complete their cruel design, when a man happened to hear the screams of their victim, and came to his relief. This outrage awakened much indignation in the community; but it was only acting out boldly a spirit which is often indulged by boys, and which manifests itself by inflicting cruel suffering upon those who have given offence.

A cruel disposition sometimes manifests itself by the infliction of pain in a spirit of thoughtlessness, and of wanton sport. Boys who are addicted to this habit, unlike the lad above mentioned, may be free from malice; and yet they occasion much unnecessary suffering among the victims of their thoughtlessness. They seem to imagine that others have no feeling, and that pain, if only inflicted in fun, is no longer pain. They should ponder the fable of "the boys and the frogs." "It may be sport to you," said the poor frogs to their tormentors, "but it is death to us."

Boys sometimes evince a cruel disposition by a domineering and overbearing course of conduct towards those who are weaker than themselves.

They take advantage of the weakness of others, and make an unfair use of the power and influence they possess. This is the very spirit of the tyrant. Tyranny is power abused; and the strong and lusty youth who exercises an arbitrary and despotic authority over his juniors in years, or his inferiors in physical strength, is just so far a tyrant.

Another way a cruel spirit sometimes manifests itself, is, by teasing and annoying others. These petty annoyances, considered by themselves, may appear like trifles; but when they are constantly repeated, they occasion much real suffering, especially if their victim has the misfortune to be petulant or timid. Many a boy has almost lost the affection of a sister for life, by persisting in this habit.

There is one other way, (and it is the last that I shall mention,) in which boys manifest a cruel spirit. It is by disregarding the feelings of their parents. Those of you who are blessed with good fathers and mothers, know that they have many anxieties on your account, and many tender yearnings in your behalf. The youth who can trifle with these feelings — who can treat a mother's tears with cool indifference, and mock at a father's solicitude for his son — must be far advanced in hardness of heart, and cruelty of spirit.

Let me, then, urge my young readers to adopt this

as one of their rules of conduct—never to inflict needless suffering upon others. The spirit of cruelty is a ferocious, a savage, a barbarous spirit. It is the very spirit of fiends; and it is only “the dark places of the earth” that are “full of the habitations of cruelty.” The opposite of this is the spirit of heaven; and on earth, we ever find that the purest and holiest beings are the most gentle, the most affectionate, the most compassionate. Truly and beautifully has an English poet written,

“ He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

XXIX.

INTEGRITY.

A YEAR or two since, one of the members of the great English banking-house of Baring & Co. visited Boston, and was honored with a public dinner. Among the speeches made on the occasion, was one by Hon. Edward Everett, who, after referring to the immense business transacted by this house, through a period of about one hundred years, added, that “of all the millions, I had almost said uncounted millions, which have passed through their hands, *not one dishonest farthing has ever stuck by the way.*” This was certainly a high tribute to the honor and honesty of this celebrated business firm. Among bankers, merchants, and others, who have large business transactions, integrity of character is a very essential virtue; and almost the highest praise you can bestow upon such men, is, to say that no shadow of suspicion or reproach has ever fallen upon their good name.

The same virtue, — unbending integrity, — is of

the highest importance in all the other relations of life. Men cannot do business with one another, or even live together in communities, without confidence in each others' integrity. Even thieves, when they band together to plunder the public, are obliged to be honest among themselves. Integrity, therefore, is as necessary to the mechanic as to the merchant ; to the errand-boy as to the banker ; to the servant as to the master. It is one of the strong bonds, by which society is held together.

By integrity, as the word is here used, is meant, uprightness in dealings with others. As such dealings are common even among children, integrity is a virtue which the youngest of my readers may put in practice. It will make you strictly honorable and honest, in all your little bargains one with another. It will not allow you to take advantage of another's ignorance or inexperience. It will not permit you to run down an article you wish to buy, or to praise up one you wish to sell, beyond what the facts in the case will warrant. It will not suffer you to drive a hard bargain, or to give play to that kind of "sharpness" which is too much commended among men, but which is only another name for fraud and deception. It will lead you to make prompt restitution, should you discover a mistake by which you have obtained what did not belong to you. Should you find an article of value, it will lead you to return it

to the owner, if he can be ascertained. It will prompt you to keep your promises ; to be careful of the property of others, entrusted to your control ; and, in short, in all your dealings with others, it will incite you to do as you would have others do to you.

This is integrity — and nothing short of this is entitled to the name. It is worthy of notice, that the English word by which we express this virtue, is derived from the Latin term *integer*, which means entire, or whole. That cannot properly be called integrity, which is not strict and entire. It must extend even to little things ; for dishonesty in trifles naturally leads to a breach of trust in more important matters.

If men would observe the tenth commandment, there would be vastly more integrity in the world than there is. Covetousness is the root from which dishonesty springs. The surest and easiest way, therefore, to establish a character for integrity, is to avoid harboring covetous desires.

Among the illustrious men which England has produced, no one stands before Lord Bacon. The splendor of his genius not only shed a glory upon the age in which he lived, but has poured a flood of light down the track of centuries, reaching even to these latter days. This great man was not only distinguished as a philosopher, but he held many exalted offices under government. And yet this illustrious

name has come down to us with such a terribly foul blot upon it, that a writer has given its owner the sad pre-eminence of being the “ wisest, brightest, *meanest* of mankind.” Bacon with all his genius, lacked one thing — *integrity*. As Lord High Chancellor of England, he was guilty of gross bribery and corruption, and was degraded from office, and condemned to a heavy fine and imprisonment. That stain can never be wiped from his name, but the world will marvel, to the end of time, that so much greatness and so much meanness should have dwelt together.

A few years after this dark cloud overspread the glory of Lord Bacon, another illustrious name began to rise into notice in England ; and it is a name which still shines brightly on the page of England's history — that of Sir Matthew Hale. He, too, was a man of superior abilities, and of vast learning ; but it is not for these alone that he is remembered and honored. He was a man of singular integrity of character — a trait which manifested itself in the commencement of his career, and shed a lustre over his whole life. He at length became the Chief Justice of England, and endeared himself to the nation by his just, impartial, and humane conduct. To this day, his memory is cherished in England and America, but chiefly is he remembered and revered as the upright judge, and the man of lofty integrity.

Which of these illustrious men, my young friends, would you prefer to resemble? Their learning and genius may be beyond your reach, but there is not one of you who may not sink to the baseness of Bacon, or rise to the integrity of Hale.

XXX.

HONESTY THE BEST POLICY.

Perhaps what I have just written has reminded some of my young readers of the familiar maxim, "Honesty is the best policy." The meaning of this saying is, that in the long run, honesty is more profitable than dishonesty. This is true, with very few exceptions ; and in the present article, I wish to relate some instances, which illustrate it.

Some four hundred years ago, a remarkable execution took place in Germany. The criminal was very rich, and he appeared on the gallows, clothed in a black velvet cloak and cap, adorned with ermine and precious stones, and wearing the massive chain of a reigning lord. Around the gallows were arranged three hundred silver cups and fifty golden vessels of various kinds. What is still more remarkable, is, that this wealthy criminal had himself aided in building the gallows, twenty years before. At that time he was a carpenter, but fortune smiled upon him, and he gradually rose in station and wealth, until he

became the powerful Burgomaster of Augsburg. But a portion of his gains, at least, were dishonest, and a terrible retribution they brought upon him. The gold and silver vessels which decorated his gallows, were found in his house, and he had obtained them from the citizens by unjust means. So they were brought to remind the miserable man of his crime, and to impress upon the vast multitude who assembled to witness the execution, the truth that "honesty is the best policy."

A year or two ago, a rich Armenian of Constantinople lost a portfolio, containing four hundred thousand piastres, and he offered a reward of forty thousand to the finder, if he would return it. It happened that a very honest and poor old man found the treasure, and he promptly restored it to the owner, and claimed the promised reward. But the Armenian, in order to escape payment, pretended that the portfolio also contained a valuable ring, which the old man must have stolen. The affair was at length laid before the Sultan, for the finder of the money now felt that he had been doubly wronged. The Sultan, having ascertained the honesty of the old man, and the well-known avarice of his adversary, decided that, as the Armenian declared that *his* portfolio contained a ring, this could not be the one he had lost, and that he had better return it to the old man, and continue to advertise for his own. Thus did the dishonest

man learn, at a dear price that "honesty is the best policy."

In this city, not long ago, a small boy found a pocket-book in a store. He knew to whom it belonged, but did not restore it to the owner; and the consequence was, that he was arrested, and taken to the Police Court, to answer to the charge of what is termed "constructive larceny." His mother, however, made restitution, and the Court, in consideration of his youth, suffered him to be discharged; but he will doubtless remember, as long as he lives, how he learned the lesson, that "honesty is the best policy."

An old and extensive trader among the Indians, commenced his successful career in this way. He sold a quantity of goods to a chief, who agreed to bring him twelve coon-skins on the morrow, in payment. The next day, the chief returned, with his whole band, his blankets stuffed with coon-skins.

"American man, I pay now," he said, and he began counting out the skins until he had handed over twelve. Then, after a moment's pause, he offered the new trader one more, saying,

"That's it."

"I handed it back," says the trader, "telling him he owed me but twelve, and I would not cheat him." We continued to pass it back and forth, each one asserting that it belonged to the other. At last he

appeared to be satisfied, gave me a scrutinizing look, placed the skin in the folds of his blanket, stepped to the door, and gave a yell, and cried with a loud voice :

‘ Come, come, and trade with the pale face, he no cheat Indian ; his heart big.’

He then turned to me and said :

‘ You take that skin, I tell Indian no trade with you — drive you off like a dog — but now you Indian’s friend, and we yours.’

Before sundown I was waist deep in furs and loaded down with cash. So *I* lost nothing by my honesty.”

The motive to an honest life, drawn from such examples as these, is not a very high and noble one, I admit. We ought to be honest, because honesty is right, and not because we shall gain something by it. And yet, as the grand object of dishonesty, in most cases, is to gain some advantage, there is no impropriety in showing that all such hopes are in the end delusive. So, then, my young friends, if you are ever tempted to commit a dishonest act, remember that it is a sin against both God and man ; and if this is not enough to deter you from it, remember, also, that you will be a loser rather than a gainer by it, for, “ honesty is the best policy.”

XXXI.

TRUTHFULNESS.

I HAVE been quite interested in reading one of the recent publications of the Mass. S. S. Society, entitled, "Walter Powers, the Orphan Boy." It relates the history of a little boy, who somehow fell into the habit of telling falsehoods; and a very sad time he had of it, too. He went to live in a Christian family, where, though an orphan, he found a good home; but this one fault, (for in other respects he was a good boy,) made a great deal of trouble, both for himself and for the kind friends who received him into their home. At first they found it almost impossible to make him realize the wickedness of lying. Again and again he would tell the most shameful falsehoods, and evince no concern about the matter, except a fear of detection. After a while, however, he began to grow sensible of the enormity of the sin; and conscience, which had been overpowered by his bad habit, began to awake. But even after he became really anxious to get rid of his besetting sin,

he had to struggle hard to do it, and it was long before his friends dared to believe that he had conquered the enemy. Poor fellow, he found that this ugly weed which he had suffered to grow so long in his heart, had got to be so stout and deep-rooted that it required many painful efforts to pull it up. Had he not fallen under Christian influence just as he did, perhaps it would never have been exterminated.

Truthfulness is one of the foundation stones of a good character. The reputation which does not rest upon this foundation, is like the house our Saviour described, built upon the sand. It cannot stand. This corner stone of the character ought to be laid deep and firm in childhood. I hope none of my readers have neglected this important duty, and yet perhaps a few words on the subject may not be useless.

You all know that a great deal is said in the Scriptures about truthfulness and falsehood. By the aid of a reference Bible, you might easily find several scores of passages on the subject. Some of these passages are remarkably plain and emphatic. For example, we are told that the devil "is a liar, and the father of it;" that "lying lips are abomination to the Lord;" and that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Now this is remarkable language, and it expresses as strongly as words can express the

abhorrence which God feels towards this form of sin.

In the fifth chapter of Acts, is given an account of a lie and its consequences, which should be pondered by every one who is ever tempted to swerve from the truth. It is a record of the fearful judgment that came upon Ananias and his wife, in consequence of their attempt to deceive the apostles. They



were both struck dead, and their history is recorded for our admonition.

On the other hand, the manner in which God has declared his love of the truth, is hardly less remarkable. So important is this virtue considered, that

the word truth is sometimes used to signify righteousness — all the virtues and graces combined ; as when David says, “Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.” So, also, God is revealed to us as the “God of truth ;” and Christ declared himself to be “the way, the truth, and the life.”

Even among heathen nations, lying is generally regarded as a degrading vice. Some of the wise men of ancient Greece and Rome have left behind them very good precepts on this subject. But there are some people who have sunk to so low a scale, as to regard lying as innocent and justifiable. It is said that the natives of the island of Ceylon are such liars that it is impossible to depend upon their word, even when they are under oath. One of their men of high rank was once called on to give evidence at a trial, and swore such complete falsehoods that he was imprisoned for perjury. He was astonished at this, and applied to the English governor for redress. “My father,” he said, “was a liar, and my grandfather was a liar, and my great grandfather was a liar, and we are all liars. It is the custom of my country ; why should I be punished ?”

But while most people are ready enough to admit the wickedness of great lies, there are some who think it is a trifling matter to tell what they call white lies, or fibs. These little falsehoods, however, are both wrong and dangerous. They are wrong, because

they *are* falsehoods ; and they are dangorous, because they blunt the conscience, and prepare the way for still greater departures from the truth. The only safe way is, to avoid all forms of deception, whether by word or act, even in trifling matters. Dr. Johnson has wisely said, “ All truth is not of equal importance ; but if little violations be allowed, every violation will in time be thought little.”

“ He never told me a lie ! ” exclaimed a mother, weeping over the remains of her darling boy. To how many of you, my young friends, could this noble and touching tribute be paid, were your mothers suddenly called to part with you ?

XXXII.

NEATNESS.

AMONG the boys whom I meet in the street, I sometimes notice one who will answer to the following description : — His face looks as though it had not come in very close contact with soap and water for a day or two at least. His hands are begrimed with a thick and hardened coat of dirt, that must have been accumulating for several months. His finger-nails are long and black. His hair is tangled and frouzy. His clothing is, perhaps, nearly new, and of good material, but spotted with grease, ink, and other substances, and showing unmistakable signs of hard usage. The school book under his arm is little else than a collection of blotted and tattered dogs'-ears. In short, his whole appearance is that of a careless, slovenly fellow.

The personal habits of such a boy generally correspond with his slovenly appearance. His cap, when not on his head, will generally be found kicking

about on the floor. His other garments, when he has occasion to remove them, are served in the same way. You will find one leg of his pantaloons turned inside out ; his new jacket is crumpled into a heap and tossed under the chair, as though it were but an old rag ; one of his shoes is in this corner, and the other is not to be found. His books, and playthings, and everything else that belongs to him, receive the same kind of treatment.

Ten chances to one our young sloven uses tobacco ; for this vile weed is just fit for such as he, who have never taken the first lesson in neatness and cleanliness. You would suspect that he is a tobacco-chewer, from the filthy habit he has of spitting around upon the floor, walls and furniture ; and if you examine close, you will probably find some indications of the fact in the corners of his mouth. If he happens to soil his hands, he wipes them upon his pantaloons. He never thinks of removing the mud from his feet, when he enters the house. His sleeve or hand answers the purpose of a handkerchief, and he is more or less addicted to other disgusting habits, of which no neat person would ever be guilty.

The character I have described is not an uncommon one. All of you must have often seen just such boys, and you know how disagreeable their presence is. On the other hand, who does not like to see a neat, tidy boy, with his fresh, rosy face, his well-

combed hair, his cleanly though perhaps well worn dress, and his general air of order and neatness? I must confess that to me there is something very pleasant in such a sight.

A lad once applied for a situation to a merchant who had advertised for an errand boy. The gentleman told him that another boy had offered himself, a little while before, whom he thought he should employ. However, he asked the second comer a few questions, and then went and talked with the other applicant, who stood in the back part of the counting-room. The result was, that the lad who first applied was dismissed, and the other engaged. The successful lad rose from the post of errand boy to that of a clerk, and from that to a partner, and finally the whole business was relinquished to him. After he had been in the store several years, the merchant told him that he chose him in preference to the other boy, because of the general neatness of his person; while with reference to the unsuccessful applicant, he noticed that he had neglected properly to turn down his vest collar. To this apparently trivial circumstance, one boy owed the loss and another the gain of an excellent situation. The successful lad had been brought up to habits of neatness, by his mother, and to this he always ascribed much of his business prosperity.

Some of my readers may have entertained the

notion that the virtue I am trying to inculcate is not of much consequence. In fact, perhaps you do not like to see people so particular and precise about their personal appearance. There is, I know, such a thing as being over-nice, in this matter ; but the fact that some people carry the virtue of neatness to excess, is no excuse for slovenliness in any one.

There are several advantages resulting from neatness, to which I can only briefly allude. One is, the feeling of comfort and satisfaction it imparts. There is a real enjoyment in being clean and tidy, and thus neatness is its own reward. Another advantage is, its beneficial influence on our health. When the cholera and other fearful pestilences visit our cities and villages, they select their victims mainly from those who are uncleanly in their habits, or live in filthy districts. Another advantage of neatness is, that it prepossesses others in our favor, as you saw in the story of the two boys above. It is hard to love or respect a slovenly person. The fourth and last advantage I shall mention, is, that purity and cleanliness of person tend to preserve and foster purity of heart and speech. Not that the filthy and slovenly are *always* rotten to the core, — for there are cases where the disease is confined to the outside ; but when the bark of the tree becomes corrupt, there is danger that the contagion will work inwardly. Such are some of the rewards of neatness. Who of you will say this is a habit of little importance to boys?

XXXIII.

SYSTEM.

SOME of you, my young friends have perhaps played off the following trick, which is sometimes practised by boys:— You take a small stick of wood, and tell the person who is playing with you that you can tire him out completely, in the attempt to take it out of the room, although you will not interfere with his action, nor add to his burden. He laughs at the challenge; but when you take your knife and cut off a small splinter, and tell him to carry it out, and return for more, the truth flashes upon him, and he gives up the job, which might cost him a thousand journeys back and forth.

There are many people in the world who labor very hard, and yet accomplish but little, because they waste their time and strength in carrying splinters one by one, instead of taking the whole stick at once. They are people who have no order, method or system in their affairs. They begin, continue, and end their career without any definite plan, or well-

directed, systematic effort. They work at hap-hazard, and are continually going over the same ground, tearing down to-day what they built up yesterday. Such people may seem very active, but they never accomplish anything great or noble. They are unsuccessful people,—the victims, as they imagine, of ill-luck and misfortune.

What beautiful order and system do we behold in all the works of God! Every thing he has made is governed by fixed laws, and all his works are full of harmony and design. So regular are their movements, that events which are to happen in the firmament may be foretold years before they transpire. God works by system, and every event that occurs on earth, contributes towards the fulfilment of his vast designs.

When nations go to war, the commanders of the hostile armies carefully plan all the movements of their respective forces, and the fighting is done in a systematic manner. A campaign without a plan or method, would be a sure failure. The merchant who has no order or system in his business, is on the road to bankruptcy. The farmer or mechanic who knows no rule but chance, and leaves everything at loose ends, will never be successful or eminent in his calling.

The life of Dr. Noah Webster affords a striking illustration of the value of system. When a young

man, he conceived the idea of producing a new dictionary of the English language. Having determined to make this the great work of his life, he set about preparing himself for it, by an extensive course of study. Year after year he labored on, in patient obscurity, exploring the fields of literature and science, and gathering and arranging the materials for his great work. Every thing he read, or studied, or accomplished, had a bearing on the great object of his life ; and this was the grand secret of his success. "Method," says his biographer, "was the presiding principle of his life."

The love of order and system often manifests itself at an early age, and is a praiseworthy and enviable habit, even at that period of life. The boy who studies and works by method, will accomplish much more, by the same means, than another boy of similar capacity, who acts on the "helter skelter" principle. He knows what he is to do and he does it. He does not begin twenty different things, and leave them all unfinished. "One thing at a time, and a time for everything," is his motto. If he has a lesson to learn, he does not neglect it until the hour of recitation has almost arrived. He has a season for play, and another for work, and does not allow the one to interfere with the other. You think he has a strange knack of doing things *easily*, and won-

der if he has not got a stronger mind and body than other boys. But his secret is, order and system. These habits are his "labor-saving machinery," which enable him to accomplish more work than his fellows, in a better manner, and in less time.

A very rich man, who had been quite poor when a boy, was asked how he acquired his wealth. He replied that his father made him form the habit in early life, of doing every thing in its time, and it was to this habit that he owed his success.

Do you ask how you shall form this habit? Begin in your own room. Have a place for every article that belongs to you, and when you have done using a garment, a book, or a play-thing, do not throw it down at random, but put it where it belongs. Then, when you want it again, you will not lose your time or temper in hunting it up. Have, also, a time for every duty. If it is your business to drive home the cows from pasture at night, always be on hand for duty, at the regular hour. If you have a patch of ground to keep clear of weeds, instead of working very hard an afternoon, and then neglecting it for a fortnight, bestow a little systematic attention upon it three or four times a week. If you are expected to learn a lesson at home, every day, to recite at school in the morning, set apart a particular hour to attend to it, and let nothing interfere with

your plan, when you can avoid it. So with every other duty. Persevere a little while in this course, and you will soon have acquired habits of order and system that will be of the utmost value to you through life.

XXXIV.

T R U S T S .

Most of you, I suppose, like to be trusted with responsibilities. You feel gratified when you are sent to select and purchase an article on your own judgment; or when you are entrusted with a large sum of money, which you are to convey to some one else; or when you are permitted to go on a journey alone, to visit a friend; or when anything of value is left in your charge, in the absence of the owner. It is always pleasant to know that others confide in our ability and fidelity.

But there are some boys, as well as men, who cannot safely be trusted. They may be divided into two classes; viz., those who are dishonest, and those who are careless, thoughtless and inattentive. It is a sad thing for a boy to fall into either of these classes. His weakness will soon be discovered, and then everybody will look upon him with distrust.

An intelligent, respectable and promising boy of fourteen years of age, once entered into the employ-

ment of a store-keeper in a New England town. He won the confidence of his employer ; but soon began to abuse the trust reposed in him, by purloining small coins from the money drawer. At first, his depredations were neither frequent nor large ; but having broken down the barriers of his integrity, he grew more and more daring in his secret visits to the till. At length his employer began to suspect something was wrong, and sent an officer to the house of the boy's father, to whom the dishonest youth confessed his guilt. After the officer had retired, the miserable boy, stung by mortification and remorse, and dreading further exposure, went to his room and discharged the contents of a pistol into his head. Thus, at the age of fifteen, he went down into a dishonored grave, inflicting a terrible calamity upon his family, and solemnly admonishing the young, by his mournful end, to beware how they betray a trust committed to their charge.

Less criminal, but far more common, is that species of faithlessness to trusts which springs from carelessness and inattention. Many boys who would not think of pilfering property left in their care, will yet suffer it to be injured or lost by their neglect. Great mischief often results from this bad habit. I dare say the trouble and loss occasioned by the heedlessness of boys, is five times greater than that caused by their dishonesty. A lad, for instance, has a little

sister, whom he is required to attend daily on her way to and from school. She is too small to be trusted alone, and besides, there is a stream of water to pass on the way, which makes it more dangerous. But, one pleasant day, after school, her brother gets so interested in his sports with his mates, that he forgets his little sister, and does not go for her. She waits until she is tired, and then starts for home. On reaching the stream, she sees something bright in the water, close to the bank. By turning aside a little from the road, she thinks she can reach it. She makes the attempt, falls into the swift current, and is borne away. What will her brother say, when he goes home alone, and his parents anxiously inquire for the little girl? And O, how will he feel when they and the neighbors go forth to search the woods and the river for the lost one, and return with only her lifeless body!

This is only a supposed case; but I can assure you, my young readers, that many a slight neglect of a trust has led to as sad a result as the one I have imagined. Let me now relate a real incident, which illustrates how a boyish breach of trust may lead to a serious loss of property. In a village in Maine, there was a boy who was employed to make the fires in the district school-house. One morning, early in winter, as he was trudging to the school-house, he noticed that the river was frozen over hard enough for

skating. Anxious to try the ice, he kindled the fire as quick as possible, and left it sooner than usual. In his haste to get away, he piled a large quantity of wood upon the fire, and also left a lot of fuel in dangerous proximity to it, intending to return shortly, and put things to rights. But during the few minutes he was absent upon the ice, the fire fell down, and spread among the wood surrounding it, and soon the whole building was in flames, and totally consumed. And thus nearly a thousand dollars was lost because a boy neglected a trust for a few moments.

My young friends, trusts of greater or less importance are already committed to each one of you. If they are small and humble, do not despise them; but remember that he who is faithful in little things, will also be faithful in great ones; and that "to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." In the words of Paul to Timothy, then, I say to each one of you, "Keep that which is committed to thy trust."

XXXV.

QUARRELS.

As two men were out hunting, in Maine, not long ago, they came across two large bucks, lying dead upon the ground. On examination, they discovered that the horns of the animals were so firmly locked together, that they could not be separated. It was evident that there had been a desperate encounter, which had resulted in the death of both of the combatants. The horn of one had severely wounded the throat of his antagonist, and probably hastened his end ; while the survivor was doomed to suffer a still more terrible death, by starvation.

These bucks were silly animals, no doubt. Were not the forests of Maine large enough for both, that they must attempt to knock each other's brains out ? Or was there an old grudge between them, that they must needs settle by making battering-rams of themselves ? We cannot say how this was ; but of this we are certain, that their propensity to quarrel got them into a very ridiculous and, as it proved, a fatal

predicament. Nor were these silly bucks much more foolish, after all, than some people are whom God has endowed with rational minds. Who has not seen boys bumping their heads together, and striking, kicking and clawing each other in a furious manner, as though they were wild beasts! And if they did not kill each other, like the bucks, did they not in most cases come out of the encounter equally damaged, both in person and character? And what good did their fighting do? Did it settle the dispute between them? Did it make them love each other better? Did it win them the respect of other people? Did it benefit them in any way? O no, it was a tempest of passion and blows, and the only marks it left behind it, were those of guilt, shame and destruction.

My young friends, if any of you are afflicted with a contentious, quarrelsome disposition, now is the time to correct it, before this unhappy habit of mind becomes incurable. Every time you indulge such a temper, the habit will become more confirmed. You certainly will admit that it is wrong to quarrel. The Bible condemns the practice, in the plainest terms, and teaches us to love our enemies, and to do good to those who injure us. You know, too, something of the bad effects of quarreling. It does no good; on the contrary, it makes a bad matter worse, and widens the breach in which it originates. It is also a foolish and dangerous method of settling disputes.

Some people are habitually and notoriously quarrelsome. They have become so accustomed to contention, that it is almost impossible to have anything to do with them, without being drawn into a quarrel. Hot water is the element in which they seem to thrive best. They can always find something to contend about, though oftentimes the quarrel is all on one side. They remind me of a foolish cockerel I once knew, who one day saw himself reflected in a bright tin boiler which happened to be in the yard, and flew at it in gallant style. He did not discover his mistake, but kept up the battle with himself for some time, stopping every little while to crow over his imaginary victory. It is an old saying that, "it takes two to make a quarrel," but it is not always so. If you look through colored glass, every object you see takes the hue of the glass. So to a quarrelsome fellow, everybody he meets seems to dare him to fight, when in fact the disposition to quarrel is entirely confined to himself.

But the danger is not so much that any of you will become habitually quarrelsome, as that you will occasionally be betrayed into contests with your fellows, in moments of sudden passion. Ah, these fits of sudden passion — what mischief do they work in the young heart! Oft and again have they proved bombshells, scattering the firebrand of fierce contention, where all was friendship and peace before. Avoid

all such outbursts of passion, if you would live an innocent and happy life. Rather yield something of your rights, than contend for them in such a spirit as this. Remember the words of Holy Writ, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." But of this, more anon.

14*



XXXVI.

GETTING MAD.

SOME people are always getting wisdom, and others, money. Some get renown, and others, shame and sorrow. But of all the getters with whom I am acquainted, those who are much addicted to *getting mad*, are about as foolish, unhappy, and disagreeable a set of people as any other class that can be named. There are those who always fly into a passion, at the slightest provocation ; whose tempers

are like tinder, that needs only a spark to set it a-fire. Others get angry less frequently, and only when they have been unusually annoyed or tempted. Both of these classes are deserving of censure, though not equally. They bear about the same relation to each other, that the man who gets drunk every day does to him who gets into that situation only once in a week or month. "Getting mad" is a species of intemperance, which cannot be safely indulged; even on rare occasions.

"I couldn't help it — I was *mad*," said a boy, in extenuation of some improper act which he had committed in a moment of passion. This was a poor excuse, for he could have helped getting into a passion, if he could not control the storm after it was once aroused. Anger resembles insanity. A man in a furious passion is hardly conscious of what he says or does. He is no longer a rational being. He throws away for the time the high prerogative of reason, and puts himself on a level with the brute.

Some one has said, that "he submits to be seen through a microscope, who suffers himself to be caught in a passion." By this is meant, I suppose, that a person in a rage makes disclosures of his secret character, which he would carefully conceal were he in his right mind; just as one who has inhaled "laughing gas," unconsciously acts out his natural disposition, while under its influence. It is also the

case, in many instances, that anger magnifies the deformities of character it exposes. It makes its subject appear worse than he really is, and thus he may be said to place his character under a microscope.

When a person gets angry, he is very apt to say and do many ridiculous things. Did you never feel that you had made a fool of yourself, in a fit of passion? "He that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly," says Solomon; and the experience of most of you will probably confirm the saying.

"The angry man punishes himself for the faults of another," is also a common and very true saying. Anger is a very uncomfortable passion. You cannot be happy, while its unholy fires are burning in your heart; and even after the outbreak is over, the recollection of it must disturb your peace. So you may be said to punish yourself, out of spite to some one else.

Anger leads to revenge — one of the lowest and most malignant passions of the human heart. The latter would have no existence but for the former. Man is never so much like a demon, as when revenge has taken full possession of his soul, and we cannot too carefully guard against opening the door to this hideous enemy.

Anger is unchristian. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry," says the preacher; and an apostle commands us to put away "all bitterness,

and wrath, and anger." All holy thoughts and feelings flee away from the angry heart, and the unclean spirits that have been cast out, return with sevenfold strength.

Here are six good reasons for not getting mad. I will give you one more, and that is, the sad consequences that often result from a momentary fit of passion. In Rochester, a year or two ago, two boys met in the street, and got into a dispute about a small cake, of the value of half a cent. From words they proceeded to blows, when one of them drew a knife, and plunged it into the breast of the other, killing him almost instantly.

In Boston, not long ago, two apprentices quarreled about the ownership of a tool, which both claimed, and in the heat of passion, a struggle ensued, during which one of them gave his comrade a blow on the head which resulted in death. The survivor, whose previous character had been good, was sentenced to prison for manslaughter.

In Texas, a few months since, two young men, who slept together, and had been intimate friends for years, got to playing, as they arose in the morning. One of them pulled off the bed-clothes from the other; then they commenced scuffling, and finally both got mad. A struggle now ensued, during which one of them seized a pistol by the muzzle, and dealt his companion a severe blow on the fore-

head fracturing the skull. The blow not only dangerously wounded the person at whom it was aimed, but it also discharged the pistol, and instantly killed the one who held it. Truly a sad termination to a little sport.

These are all extreme cases, I know; but they illustrate the danger of getting mad. In many instances where the result is not so tragic as in those I have just related, the consequences of anger are nevertheless very sad and painful, and plant a thorn in the heart which even repentance cannot extract. Let us, then, try to avoid this fault, and to practice the rule of our Saviour, whose command is, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

XXXVII.

REVENGE.

THIS, my young friends, is one of the blackest and most malignant passions of the human heart. If we wished to imagine a fiend, the twin passions of hate and revenge would stand out most prominently in the picture. And yet these passions, so congenial to devils, and so unfitting to all other beings in the universe, are common among men, and even manifest themselves in very early life. Who of us all can say he never revenged an injury, nor indulged in a retaliatory spirit? Alas, I fear it would be hard to find a boy over six years of age, who never was guilty of this sin. And I quite as strongly fear that it would be easy to find hundreds of lads, under fifteen years of age, who are so accustomed to indulging in revenge, that they are little better off than a man described by John Foster, whose memory consisted of "a row of hooks to hang up grudges on." But, fortunately, though this fault is a great and a common one, it is not beyond the hope of a remedy. We can conquer it, if we will make the effort.

If you want motives, for trying to subdue this evil tendency of your nature, you will find plenty of them in the Bible, especially in the teachings of the Saviour. He left no place for revenge, in the hearts of his followers. His rule is, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you ;" and his whole life on earth was conformed to this beautiful pattern. The gospel is full of this spirit of forgiveness.

But there are two or three motives for repressing revenge, drawn from experience, to which I will allude. And, in the first place, what good does it do to revenge an injury? It certainly does not benefit the person upon whom it is inflicted, for it is designed to have just the opposite effect. But, you say, revenge is sweet — there is an inward satisfaction in taking vengeance upon one who has angered you. I admit there is a kind of wicked pleasure in it ; but how often is this sweetness like that of certain poisons, which are pleasant in the mouth, but speedily turn to bitterness and death in the stomach. Many a man has blasted his happiness forever, by one mad act of revenge ; and it may safely be said that no one can really enjoy life who harbors a revengeful spirit.

There is another thing to be noticed ; revenge does not diminish the number of offences between man and man. Suppose we all should throw the Bible away,

and act on the principle of revenging every affront or injury we received ; do you think society would be in a better and happier state than it is now ? The experiment has often been tried, in different ages and countries, but always with terrible results. It was once tried on a small scale in a certain district in Kentucky. About the year 1822, a quarrel arose between two families, which, aggravated by acts of retaliation, settled down into a deadly feud. Clans were formed, and a regular war was carried on between the two parties for over thirty years. It was an endless series of acts of revenge, first by one clan, and then by the other. At length the parties signed a formal treaty of peace ; and it was then stated, that by the various battles, assassinations and sieges between these two families, eight men and boys had been killed, several crippled, and forty-eight children left fatherless.

Revenge is cruel and blind. It often fails to distinguish between the innocent and the guilty, and between great and small offences. Its severest blows frequently fall where they are least deserved. This is sufficient reason for abstaining from revenge, were there no other objection to it.

We should try to check the first risings of revenge in our hearts. The longer we brood over our injuries, and nurse our anger, the more likely shall we be to be tempted to retaliate. A man who was executed

for murder at Mobile, a year or two since, concluded his confession with the following solemn warning to the tempted : —

“ The first thought of crime, if not resisted, may lead to the destruction of body and soul. I can scarcely realize now that I have committed anything so awful as to stain my hands in my brother's blood. Satan seems, when I first yielded to the thought, to have bound me with chains, and blunted my feelings, and blinded my eyes ; so that, although I tried again and again to get loose, I was dragged to the commission of my foul offence.”

Ah, it is “ the first thought of crime ” that is the parent of all the sad consequences that follow.

“ Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us.” This is a portion of the beautiful prayer which Christ has taught us ; but how can we offer it, if we harbor thoughts of revenge against any human being ? Is it not shocking to think that many cannot repeat the Lord's Prayer, without calling down a curse upon their heads ! My young reader, I trust you are not of this number ; but if you are ever tempted to take vengeance into your own hand, remember, I pray you, that petition, “ forgive us *as* we forgive others.”

Wouldst thou, when thy faults are known,
Wish that pardon should be shown ?
Be forgiving, then, and do
As thou wouldst be done unto.”

XXXVIII.

SELF-RELIANCE.

LOOKING at mankind from a particular point of views we see two classes of people in the world, those who walk on their own legs, and those who contrive to get about on the shoulders of others. This, of course, is a figurative expression, but you will readily understand the idea conveyed. The two classes are, those who depend upon themselves, and those who depend upon others.

These two classes are found among oöys, as well as among men. Some lads, when they have an unusual or difficult duty to perform, take hold of it as if they meant to accomplish it by their own efforts. They evidently feel some confidence in themselves, and have no idea of using other people's minds, arms or legs, when their own will answer just as well. If they have a knotty question in arithmetic to work out, they do not ask anybody to show them how to do it, before they have tried themselves. If they have a hard piece of work to do, they do not go about, whining, "I can't do it, it's of no use to try;" but

they take hold of the task in a resolute, hopeful manner, and the difficulties soon vanish.

But there is another class of boys, who are the opposite of all this. A little difficulty in the way, will frighten them from any thing they undertake to do. Like the locomotive, they cannot go ahead, unless the track is laid out smooth and plain before them, and every obstacle removed from their path. "Can't" is a word always at their tongue's end. They are famous, not for what they can do, but for what they cannot do.

I need not inform you from which of these classes of boys spring our ingenious inventors, our successful farmers, mechanics and merchants, our daring sailors, our devoted and useful clergymen, our learned lawyers and judges, our skilful physicians, our accomplished teachers, our eminent writers and orators, and all our other successful and useful men. Such men are not dropped down into their eminent positions by a good fortune that favors the lazy ; nor are they carried up to the heights they attain upon the shoulders of others. No, they are men who are not afraid of difficulties, and who learned in boyhood to depend upon themselves.

A teacher, when asked his opinion of a certain school book, replied,

"I consider it a great nuisance for classes, it saves them such a deal of hard work."

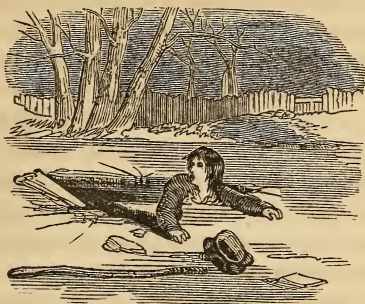
He was right, for it is very rare that a scholar can master any branch of learning without "hard work;" and if his teacher or text book undertakes to do this work for him, he will derive very little benefit from his studies. A man with a perfectly sound body, might walk upon crutches until he lost the use of his own limbs. The student who is helped through all his difficulties, will at length find himself in a somewhat similar predicament.

It is a fact that has been often remarked upon, that the great majority of the foremost men in all the ranks and professions of life, were once poor boys. You have the explanation of this interesting fact, in the habit which I am trying to illustrate. The sons of the rich are too apt to rely upon the wealth and position of their parents, instead of their own strength of mind and body. In many cases, too, they have servants at their command, on whose hands and feet they depend more than upon their own. The consequence is, they lean upon these supports so long, that after a while they are scarcely able to stand alone, much less to bear away any prize in the great contest of life. On the other hand, the boy who has none of these mischievous props and crutches, soon learns to trust to his own powers, which grow as they are exercised, until he reaches the full strength of perfect manhood.

There is a Latin proverb, which means, "He who

thinks he can, *can*." This will generally hold true. *Can* and *can't* are most potent words. Speak the one, and difficulties vanish like morning mist at the approach of the hot sun ; but whisper the other, and the same mist is converted into a solid and impenetrable mountain, frowning in your pathway, and discouraging you from all effort. *Can* is the magic "open sesame," by which the wise man gains admittance at whatsoever door he chooses to apply. *Can't* is the bewitched key, by which the irresolute lock themselves out from all that is valuable and noble.

My young friend, you have a talent, perhaps three, five or ten talents, but certainly one. Supposing God has committed but one to your care, what are you going to do with it? Will you do as did the man in the parable, who buried his talent, and when he was called to account, said he "*was afraid*,"—that is, had no confidence in his own ability to improve or even to keep good the gift God had bestowed upon him? O, think again, before you take such a foolish and guilty step.



XXXIX.

DANGEROUS SPORTS.

Most of you, my young friends, devote a considerable portion of your time to amusements. Your daily sports form a very important part of your life. This is right. God intended it should be so. But the poet Cowper has said of the boy,

“E’en in his pastimes he requires a friend,
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend ;
O’er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions and control their tide ;
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
T’ impress a value, not to be erased,
On moments squandered else, or running all to waste.”

Now I cannot undertake to do all this for you ; but if you will give me your attention, I will endeavor to offer you a few hints in relation to your sports, that may be of some value to you.

And in the first place, I want to caution you against all fool-hardy and dangerous sports. There is not such a scarcity of safe amusements, that a boy need risk his limbs or his life, to find enjoyment. There are a plenty of ways in which recreation may be found, without exposing either soul or body to danger. But there are many lads who seem to have a special fondness for rash, reckless and fool-hardy sports ; and the consequence is, we can hardly take up a newspaper, without finding in it an account of serious and often fatal accidents to boys.

A few weeks since, a boy of this spirit, about fourteen years old, who was attending school in a village in New York, thought he would see how closely he could jump before a locomotive at full speed, and escape. Death was the penalty of his rashness. Boys residing near the railroads are often in the habit of getting on the cars, when arriving at or departing from the depot, for the sake of a short ride ; and many is the limb that has been cruelly crushed, and many the young form that has been ground lifeless under the ponderous wheels, in this way.

I have already alluded, in these pages, to the dan-

gerous practice of gunning. What a multitude of boys are every year killed, or maimed and disfigured for life, by the careless use of firearms ! Take this advice, my young friends, and you will never regret it :—Have nothing to do with powder !

Sailing, bathing and skating are all excellent amusements, when they can be safely indulged in ; but under certain circumstances, which I need not explain, they are dangerous, and occasion a sad loss of life, every season. The young should never indulge in sports of this kind, without the knowledge and consent of their parents or guardians.

A bright and promising boy got into a habit of sliding down the banisters, when he had occasion to go down stairs. One day, while the family were stopping at a large hotel, during a temporary absence from home, this lad undertook to practice his dangerous feat ; but losing his balance, he fell through three stories of the building, and his head was literally dashed to pieces upon the marble floor below. Probably he had been often warned of the danger of this amusement, but he did not give heed.

Some boys are addicted to the foolish practices of standing on the head, turning somersets, &c. I have known sudden death to result from both of these practices, and it ought to be generally understood by the young that they are injurious and dangerous.

But I cannot specify all the forms of dangerous

sport to which boys are more or less addicted. I have mentioned some of the most common kinds, and must leave you to fill up the catalogue, each for himself. Do not say you are not afraid — you can take care of yourself, &c. Every reckless boy who ever sacrificed his life to his folly, has said and thought the same thing. It is not a mark of wisdom to despise danger.

But you say you like to see a boy manifest a bold and daring spirit. So do I, when there is a proper occasion for it. If you want to show your bravery, do it by daring to do right, when a cowardly boy would be sure to do wrong. Dare to confess a fault, even at the risk of punishment. Dare to refuse, when others would tempt you to sin. Dare to take the side of the weak and oppressed, even against the popular current. Dare to let your comrades know that your conduct is governed by fixed principles, and that you are afraid to do wrong. This is the noblest kind of daring. And should you ever be placed in circumstances that admitted of your risking health or life in a really good cause, then, too, you may show your daring in another form. To face danger and death, in behalf of another, is noble ; but to run this risk in sport, is the worst kind of foolhardiness. The one is true courage ; the other is courage without sense or judgment.

Here, then, in a line, is the lesson of this chapter :
Life is too precious a gift to be thrown away in fun.

X L .

ROUGH PLAY.

I HAVE mentioned several kinds of boyish sports that are attended with danger to those who indulge in them. But there is another kind of dangerous sports to which I must allude ; sports that may result in harm to others, though not to yourself. They may be classed under the head of " rough play."

Many large boys seem to be really anxious to gain a reputation for rude and rough manners. They imagine they shall in this way impress the girls and younger boys of their acquaintance, with a vivid sense of their boldness, independence and superiority. Those who play with them are sure to be frequently reminded of the strength of their arms and legs, the solidity of their fists, and the hardness of their hearts. They go in for " rough and tumble " sports, and in their intercourse with small children act the part of the elephant in the story, who danced among the chickens. The consequence is, they are first feared, then shunned, and then hated, by the victims of their roughness.

A boy of this stamp was once at play around a school-house, where there were many children assembled, when he chanced to notice a smaller lad, seated upon the top of a high fence. Approaching him, he suddenly seized him by the leg, and pushed him off. The little boy fell heavily upon a brick pavement, with a scream which brought several of his young companions to his aid. They gently lifted him up. One of his arms swung strangely, as they raised him, and he could not bear to have them touch it. It was broken; and many were the weary days of pain and confinement that little boy had to pass through, in consequence of that one act of a rough and thoughtless boy.

One summer day, a party of boys in a country village went to bathe in the river. While one of them was floating upon his back, on top of the water, another lad, in the spirit of fun, jumped upon him. The shock so affected the floating boy, that his comrades were obliged to go his relief. As soon as they removed him from the water, he commenced vomiting; and the next day he was a corpse. Had the boy who inflicted this fatal injury upon his mate, been taught to avoid rough sports, he would have escaped the life-long pang which those must endure who heedlessly take the life of another.

Several boys and girls were one day going home from the village school, when they discovered a small

snake by the road-side. The boys quickly killed the reptile, and one of them tried to frighten a little girl by putting it upon her. The girl struggled, but was rudely pushed down and the snake placed upon her shrinking flesh. She ran home, in her fright, complained of a violent headache, was thrown into convulsions, and became delirious. She lingered several days in great suffering, and then death came to her relief.

These instances will show you what I mean by rough sports. There are many other forms in which this spirit is manifested by boys, but I have not room to mention them, nor is it necessary that I should. Whenever you inflict pain or inconvenience upon others, or disregard their rights and feelings, or expose them to unnecessary danger, in your sports, you exhibit this spirit. I need not try to prove to you that this is mean and unmanly. You know it, already. It is bad enough to expose ourselves to danger, by our rough and careless habits; but it is still worse to make others suffer in consequence of them.

No sensible or well-bred boy will covet the distinction of being "as rough as a bear." This is a quality that well becomes a savage beast, but it is entirely out of place in a rational being. Strive rather, my young friends, to cultivate the spirit of gentleness and courtesy. Gentleness is the foundation of true polite-

ness and good breeding. It is also one of "the fruits of the Spirit." "Be gentle unto all men;" "be blameless and harmless;" "be ye kind one to another;" "follow after the things that make for peace." This is the spirit of the gospel. Let it govern all your intercourse with others, and control even your sports and amusements.

XLI.

MISCHIEVOUSNESS.

I HAVE alluded to some of the sports of boyhood, and advised you to avoid those plays and habits that are rough and dangerous. There is another kind of amusement sometimes indulged in by boys, which I desire to warn you against. It goes by various names. A successful effort in this line you will often hear called "a practical joke," or "a cute trick." The more proper name, however, is mischievousness. But see that you do not mistake the meaning of this word. It does not mean a cunning but well-meant and harmless kind of sport. It implies an *evil intention*; a "disposition to do harm, or to vex or annoy," as the dictionary explains it.

Do you think it can ever be right to harm, vex or annoy others, in sport? Is it manly and generous to do it? Do you like to have others serve you in this way? If you cannot say yes to these questions, (and I do not think any of you can,) then it is evident that mischievousness is a bad habit. Some boys have

naturally a roguish disposition, or a strong propensity to mirthfulness and fun. This propensity may be innocently indulged within proper limits ; but those in whom it is strongly developed, should be careful that their capital jokes, their funny tricks, and their witty remarks, do not harm or annoy those who are the subjects of them. So long as both parties enjoy the sport, it is well ; but when the enjoyment is all on one side, it has gone too far, and should be stopped at once.

Some mischievous boys found a horse feeding in the highway, one evening. They thought they would have some sport with him, and so they drove him into an empty freight car that stood upon the railroad track, and fastened him in. The next morning the car was hitched to a train, and the horse was carried thirty miles from his home, before he was discovered. The boys probably thought it was a fine joke ; but it was altogether too dearly bought, for it cost the owner of the horse a day's anxiety and trouble.

I once heard of a boy who was employed in a shop, and who, being lazy as well as mischievous, used frequently to steal away to the scuttle, on the roof of the building, and with a piece of looking-glass, flash the sun into the faces of persons at work in neighboring shops. The neighbors at length complained to the boy's master, and he desired them to inform him the next time they saw him practising his trick. They

did so ; and the master, having caught his boy in the act, made him descend to the attic, where he played a “ practical joke ” upon him with the aid of a rope’s end, which, it must be confessed, the young rogue richly deserved. It is a pity that all who amuse themselves by annoying others cannot be as summarily punished.

A mischievous disposition sometimes leads to very serious consequences. Several boys were once playing in a boat that was moored near a beach. In a sudden freak of mischief, they loosed the boat from her moorings, and pushed her off, with one of their mates on board—a lad of twelve, named Barney. The current immediately carried the boat away, towards the sea ; and the boys, alarmed at the mischief they had done, ran away, and informed no one of the dangerous situation of their mate. Poor Barney soon drifted out, far away from land, and for three days and three nights he floated about, without seeing any vessel. There was a little bread in the boat, but his mouth was so parched with thirst, that he could not swallow it. At length, just as he was ready to perish, the captain of a steamer, four or five miles off, discovered his little boat, and went to his relief. He was conveyed in safety to his home, after suffering more than the horrors of death ; and thus ended what was designed to be a little bit of fun.

Not long ago, some boys in Mississippi played a

practical joke upon a dog, by tying some fire-crackers to his tail, and then touching them off. The poor dog, in his fright, ran into a cotton-shed, and set fire to the cotton, which resulted in the destruction of two hundred thousand dollars' worth of property. That was costly sport, indeed.

My young friends, do not amuse yourselves at the expense of another, even of a dumb beast. It may cost more than you intend, either in money or in suffering. But if no such evil should result, it is wrong to indulge such a propensity, and that, I hope, will be a sufficient reason to deter you from it. The Bible tells us, "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief." If you do not wish to be rated in that class, you must keep out of mischief.



XLII.

HOME.

You are all aware, my young friends, that we are inclined to think too much of the temporal blessings we enjoy ; but there is one temporal gift God has bestowed upon most of you, which you are in no danger of valuing too highly. This gift is *a good home*. The danger is, not that you will think too much, but too little, of this inestimable blessing. A love of home is a beautiful trait in a boy, and it is a pretty sure evidence that he will not make a bad man. There are many boys, however, who appear to be quite destitute of this attachment. They scarcely enter

their teens, before they manifest an impatience to get away from home. They seem to think that home is a very good place for girls and small children, but that a boy who "means to be anything," must escape from its restraints and influences as soon as he can. Home, in their opinion, is a good harbor to make in distress, and a good place for little boats to sail; but *they* want to launch out upon the great ocean, where there is plenty of room to cruise about, and nobody to interfere with their plans.

About twenty years ago, there lived in a village in Maine a boy of twelve years, who entertained such notions as these. He was tired of living at home, and thought it would be a fine thing to be independent of his parents. After awhile, he succeeded in getting away from home — whether with his parents' consent, or not, I do not know. Though but a dozen years old, he entered the United States navy, and served three years. He then entered the merchant service, and continued to be a sailor, most of the time, during the remainder of his life. But at an early age he fell in with bad companions; and having no well-established principles, he yielded to temptation, and entered upon a life of sin and crime, which was a few months since brought to an abrupt and terrible end upon the gallows, in this State. This unhappy individual, whose name was Clough, told one who visited him the day before he was hung, that if he

had not left home so early, he would never have been a criminal.

God was as wise as he was good, in establishing the family relation, and thus providing a home or shelter, in which the young may be reared, secure from evil influences. Men have tried the experiment of educating their children in one common herd, but never with success. The Spartans, a rude people who lived several hundred years before the birth of Christ, had all their boys brought up together, after they were seven years old. They were regarded as the property of the State, and after they had reached that age, they were almost wholly removed from parental influence. The effect of this unnatural arrangement, even on a pagan people, was decidedly bad. But in a Christian land, home influences are far more precious than they can be in heathen countries. The Spartan boy could do better without his home than the American boy can do without his. The sweet domestic influences and gentle restraints of a Christian home, are just what the young need, to fit them for the duties of life. These are the strongest safeguard of youthful virtue; and to be impatient of them in early youth, is almost always a bad sign.

When a man is about to build a ship, he puts together the frame upon the shore, and not on the ocean. He does not launch it upon the waves, before

it is half completed, in his hurry to see it afloat ; but he patiently puts all its parts together, and does not send it to sea until it is strong and complete, and able to battle with the winds and waves. A boy at home may be compared to a new ship on the stocks. He is forming a character, and preparing to launch out upon the tide of life. He is putting into the frame-work of that character either timbers, and braces, and bolts, that shall resist the strongest assaults of temptation, or poor and weak substitutes, which the first rough encounter will dash to pieces. If he does his work faithfully, and does not launch his bark too soon, he will remember with peculiar satisfaction, as long as he lives, the twelve, fourteen or sixteen years he spent "on the stocks."

Is there a youth among my readers who is getting tired of his home, and longing to go out from its roof, and become his own master? Nay, my young friend, think not lightly of that hallowed place. Love it and prize it, for the good it has done and may do you. Make the most of its privileges and benefits, while you are of an age to enjoy them. Above all, strive to contribute your share to its happiness, by your dutiful and exemplary behavior, towards each member of the household.

XLIII.

ASSOCIATES.

I LATELY read a singular story of two little boys, who had lost an intimate playmate, by his removal from the village, and who in consequence felt quite lonesome. There was no other little boy in the neighborhood, to supply the place of the missing one, and the two that remained tried to think of some way to make up for their loss. At length they hit upon an idea. They decided that one of them should be *planted*, with his feet projecting out of the ground, from which they imagined two new boys would grow, and thus their former number be restored. And they had actually commenced carrying their novel plan into effect, when a gentleman discovered their movements, and rescued the little fellow who was to be planted, from the sand by which he was nearly covered, and in which he would have soon perished.

The feeling which prompted these boys to this strange act, is one that God has planted in our hearts for a wise end. There is something within us that

craves companionship. We cannot be happy, without associates and friends. No small proportion of the punishment of criminals in our prisons, consists in their being cut off almost entirely from intercourse with others. If you were to be shut up in a room by yourself, even for twenty-four hours, without seeing any person, you would think the punishment a very severe one; and if it were continued a few months, it is very likely that you would become insane.

But while the gift of friends and associates is so essential to our happiness, like most of our blessings, it may be turned into a curse. Our characters depend very much upon the kind of company we keep. There is an animal called the chameleon, whose hue depends upon the color of the objects by which it is surrounded. So do our characters take their color, in a measure, from those with whom we associate most intimately. If our companions are virtuous, their virtues will serve as a strong wall around our own. If they are loose and immoral, we cannot mingle with them without having our moral principles undermined and weakened, to a greater or less extent. Many a destiny has been decided forever by the choice of a friend.

Two young men, about sixteen years of age, came to Boston from a distant town in another State, to find employment. One of them was an orphan, and

had no friend in the city to whom he could go for advice. But he felt the importance of having good associates, and immediately after his arrival, he sought out a clergyman of whom he had heard, and introducing himself, related his history, and expressed a wish to place himself under good religious influences. The clergyman invited him to join a Bible class, to which he assented, and the next Sabbath found him a member of the school. In a little while, he began to visit his pastor as an inquirer; and before he had been in Boston six months, he made a profession of religion and was admitted into the church; and to the day of his death, he lived a blameless and exemplary life, beloved by all who knew him.

The other youth, on finding himself in a strange city, made no effort to place himself among good associates. On the other hand, he suffered himself to be led away to the theatre, by the first young man whose acquaintance he formed. Here he became acquainted with other young men, of the same loose class, and soon he was a regular theatre-goer. From the theatre, the step was easy to the gambling saloon; and from gambling to dishonesty his progress was equally rapid; and from dishonesty to ruin and disgrace, was the last sad step in his downhill career. Had he but sought out one good friend, on his first exposure to the temptations of a city life, how different might have been his history!

A gentleman walking in a western city, had his attention attracted by a fine parrot, which talked, laughed and whistled in a way that seemed almost human. He stopped to admire the bird, and presently a dog came along, when the parrot whistled to it, and then said,

“Get out, dog—here, Prince—go away, go away—I can talk—give me a cracker.”

A colored man who was passing, now paused to listen ; but the parrot no sooner discovered him, than he addressed to him a string of low and profane expressions, too bad for me to repeat. The gentleman soon discovered that it was a very profane bird, “swearing like a trooper ;” and on inquiry, he learned that it had been brought from the Isthmus, where its association with a certain class of California emigrants had taught it the use of bad language.

Boys, if associating with men of bad habits could thus corrupt an irrational animal what do you think the effect of such associations must be upon the tender and susceptible minds of the young? Revolve this question in your mind ; and as you think it over, remember what Solomon has said :

“He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise ; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

XLIV.

TEMPERANCE.

SOME years ago, but within the recollection of many persons now living, a few good men became very much alarmed at the fearful progress of intemperance in our country. This evil had been growing very rapidly for years, and it had then spread itself like a curse over the whole land. There was danger of our becoming a nation of drunkards. These men began to ask themselves if something could not be done, to stay the desolating tide ; and the result of their inquiries and counsels was, the formation of temperance societies, and the commencement of the temperance reformation. At first their efforts were mainly directed against the immoderate use of intoxicating liquors ; for they supposed that a prudent and temperate use of such liquors was proper and necessary. But they soon discovered that the only safe ground to stand upon was this, "total abstinence from all intoxicating beverages." They accordingly adopted this as their rule, and God has blessed the

movement, so that the curse of intemperance has been very much diminished, within forty or fifty years.

But, though diminished, the curse still rests heavily upon us, and sweeps thousands of our countrymen into the vortex of poverty, crime and death, every year. The intoxicating cup is still one of the most successful snares by which the tempter decoys young men to disgrace and ruin. I must, therefore, use my humble influence to put you on your guard against this danger. When the temptation is first presented to you, at the social party, or the public festival, or on the pleasure excursion, or in the hotel, or the genteel saloon, it will probably be in a form that will seem very harmless. You may not suspect there is a serpent in the sparkling cup, and if you have not previously resolved that you will not touch it, you will be very likely to yield to the solicitations of those who present it to your lips. But you may, in a great measure, avoid this danger, by preparing to meet it *now*, before it presents itself. Do you ask how you can do this? I answer, by adopting total abstinence principles, and firmly resolving to abide by them through life. If you do this, you will be ready for the temptation when it comes, and will find it comparatively easy to decline the first glass; and one victory over the tempter will strengthen you for the next, and so on, until you are beyond all danger.

But the temptation to use intoxicating liquor some-

times presents itself to mere boys ; and this makes it the more important that they should form right principles very early in life. A lad of fifteen, who had always sustained a very good character, and whose parents were respectable, one day fell in with a few companions, who asked him to drink some strong beer. Having never fortified himself against this danger, by adopting total abstinence principles, he was induced to comply with their invitation. The beer partially intoxicated him, and while under its influence, he stole some article from a shop. He was arrested, pleaded guilty of larceny, and was sentenced to the Reform School. The temperance pledge would have saved him from all this.

In a village in New Hampshire, a few years ago, two boys of fifteen or sixteen years of age, engaged to do some work for a trader, one winter day. After their day's labor was finished, the trader very imprudently "treated" them to some intoxicating drink, of which they partook freely. The proprietor soon left the store ; and the clerk coming in, and not knowing that the boys had drank anything, at their solicitation he brought out the bottle again, and they each took another heavy dram, and then started for home. The next morning two stiffened corpses were found in the road. They were the bodies of these lads, who, overpowered by the liquor they had drank, lay down by the road side, and were frozen to death.

Their bodies were placed in the porch of the village church, and upon the lids of their coffins was laid the temperance pledge, with pens and ink. Most of those who attended the funeral, heeded the solemn admonition, and signed the pledge, over the remains of these young victims of strong drink.

After these mournful examples, let me relate the happy experience of another lad, who had the wisdom to avoid their errors. His name was Amos, and he was a clerk in a country store. It was the usage to "treat" customers after they had traded, in those days, the clerks preparing the various mixtures, and drinking with them. Amos conformed to this custom for a while; but he soon noticed that his employer generally showed before night that he had gone too far, and that the older clerks were fast following in his footsteps. Temperance societies had not then been heard of; but Amos soon made up his mind what to do. He resolved to take the ground of *total abstinence*, and he did take it, and maintained it, in spite of the ridicule of his associates. About the same time, he came to a similar decision in regard to tobacco, and never used it in any form. This boy became one of the most wealthy and eminent merchants our country has ever produced; and he was not less distinguished for his liberality and his goodness, than for his success in business. His name was AMOS LAWRENCE. A few months before his

death, in mentioning to a friend that he had never used tobacco, he added :—

“ To this abstinence from its use, (and from rum,) I owe, under God, my present position in society. Further, I have always given the preference, among such persons as I have employed for more than forty years past, to such as avoided rum and tobacco, — and my experience has been to confirm me that it is true wisdom to have done so.”

The man in whose store Mr. Lawrence served as clerk, died a bankrupt and a drunkard ; and every one of those tippling clerks went down to the drunkard's grave. How different might have been his own career, but for that early resolution of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors !

XLV.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.

You all know that there is a judge who holds a daily court in your breast, and passes sentence upon your thoughts, words and acts, as fast as you give them existence. He has been sitting there, patiently investigating your conduct, ever since you were old enough to distinguish between right and wrong. When you do right, he applauds you, in a way most grateful to your feelings. When you do wrong, he gently but firmly remonstrates ; for he is not a harsh and stern judge, and his rebukes savor of sadness, rather than severity. If you heed his voice, he will ever watch faithfully over you, shielding you from sin, and prompting you to duty. If you neglect or disobey his friendly admonitions, his voice will gradually grow weaker and weaker, until it will seldom be heard in the din of the stormy passions that will rage in your heart. But if you succeed in silencing him, it will only be for a little while. At some future time,—it may be in this world, it may be in the

next,—he will suddenly rouse himself, and avenge most fearfully the wrong you have done him.

This judge is your *conscience*, or that faculty within you which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of your actions and affections, and approves or condemns them, as the case may be. It is of the utmost importance to us, that we preserve this faculty uncorrupted, and in all its natural strength. Were it suddenly blotted out of existence, this world would be transformed into a hell, and men would be little better than devils. In vain would God invite, and Christ die, and the Spirit plead, if there was no conscience within us to answer to their voice. Look at the hoary sinner, whose conscience is “seared with a hot iron,” and you have a faint image of what all mankind would be, without this faculty.

If such is the value of conscience, how ought we to treat it? Assuredly we ought to pay a scrupulous regard to all its decisions; and that is what is meant by conscientiousness, the word I have used as the title of this chapter.

You will often be tempted to disregard the voice of conscience in small matters; and the tempter will plead earnestly that so trifling a violation of its commands cannot be of much consequence. But do not listen to such a plea. A departure from the path of right generally commences in a very small way. A little breach in the wall of your good resolution,

though not larger than a pin-hole, will allow the floods of sin to penetrate, and their pressure will easily wear a larger channel, and perhaps finally sweep your breast-work entirely away. No, if conscience says a thing is wrong, respect its verdict, and let that be the end of the matter.

Sometimes you will be inclined to do things that are of doubtful character. Conscience, not having been fully enlightened, or perhaps weakened by the neglect and resistance it has met with, will hesitate, and doubt, instead of giving you a plain decision. In such a case, a conscientious person will abstain from the action ; and then, if he errs at all, it will be on the safe side.

I know of no more beautiful and lovely character, than that of a conscientious youth, who always does what he believes to be right, and is not ashamed to have the world know he is afraid to do wrong. Even the wicked must secretly honor and admire such a character, though they may affect to laugh at the conscientious scruples by which it is governed.

But it is very different with the youth who stretches his conscience, as though it were a thing of India-rubber ; who, it may be, is careful to fulfil the weightier matters of the law, but is not particular about what he considers little things ; who is afraid his associates will pronounce him too rigid in his virtue, or "more nice than wise," as the phrase

goes. Such a youth stands on dangerous ground, and no wonder if his feet slip from under him.

Let me urge you, then, in the language of Dr. Wayland, to "make it a settled rule, always to do what your conscience directs, and to leave undone what it forbids. No matter whether it be an action, word, or thought, in public or in private, no matter how much you may suffer in consequence of it, always do what you believe to be right. There can no evil happen to you, so great as to do wrong; and you can gain no good so great, as that which arises from doing right. No matter who is for you, or who against you; always obey God in preference to every thing else."

XLVI.

PUNCTUALITY.

It is related of Lord Nelson, that on a certain occasion, when about to depart on one of his great expeditions, he ordered his carriage to be in readiness, and was assured by the coachman that it should be punctually at the door, at six o'clock.

“A quarter before,” said Nelson to him; “I have always been a quarter of an hour before my time, and it has made a man of me.”

I will not say that it is best for a man always to be fifteen minutes in advance of his appointments—such a rule might often involve a loss of time; but the prompt and punctual spirit of Nelson is worthy of being imitated by the young. Many a man owes his success in life to a habit of keeping his engagements with strict punctuality, and attending to every duty in its time. On the other hand, many a fortune has been lost, many a fine chance has slipped by, and many a prize has been thrown away, by being a little too late.



Look at that laggard and sluggardly boy, who is never on hand when he ought to be, and upon whose dilatory movements no calculation can be made. He is tardy at school, and dilatory in going home. If he agrees to meet a comrade, or to perform an act, he is sure to be a little behind the time. One o'clock, with him, means any time between one and two — and so on through the twelve hours. Times and seasons are of no sort of importance to him. He will promise anything you wish, and perform — when he pleases.

Do you know such a boy? What do you think of him? Ah, I know what you will say. You are

often annoyed and provoked by his dilatory habits. He has broken his words with you so often, that you never expect him to keep his promises. He is disliked and shunned by his young associates, and is a constant source of trouble and complaint to his parents and teacher. One thing is very certain, a boy who is always last, everywhere, will never be the first in any position of credit and usefulness. Punctuality might "make a man" of him, as it did of Nelson; but without it he will never be anything but a full-grown laggard, always a little too late for fortune's favors, and forever missing the golden opportunities which the prompt and watchful know how to improve.

Thus, you see, a dilatory man injures not only others, but himself. When he keeps others waiting for him, he robs them of so much precious time; but this is not all. He forfeits the confidence of his friends, provokes them to impatient and perhaps ill-natured comments, and at length his word is regarded by them as of no account whatever. And the consequences of his evil habit do not stop even here; for the man who is habitually a little too late, subjects himself to great inconvenience and many losses.

It is well known that Washington was a model of punctuality. When he had an appointment to keep, he was sure to be on hand at the precise moment agreed upon; and those who had intercourse with

him, were obliged to be punctual. When he invited guests to dine with him, if they were not there at the hour named, he did not wait for them ; and if they came in when dinner was half over, as was sometimes the case, his only apology would be,

“ Gentlemen, we are punctual here. My cook never asks whether the company has arrived, but whether the hour has come.”

The same great man was at one time annoyed by the conduct of his private secretary, who was repeatedly late in his attendance. The latter laid the blame to his watch ; but Washington replied,

“ You must either get another watch, or I another secretary.”

The habit of punctuality may easily be acquired in early life ; and though it may seem to be of little importance, in boyhood, its value will become more and more apparent, as you become older, until at length you may be able to say, with Nelson,

“ It has made a man of me.”

XLVII.

SELFISHNESS.

THIS, my young friends, is a trait of character that you all condemn and despise—in others. Though a common fault, it is a most unpopular one. We all like generous-hearted people, and are provoked and disgusted with selfishness, wherever we find it—except in our own hearts; as though nobody but ourselves had a right to be selfish! Now if we could only carry our dislike one degree farther, and learn to despise the selfishness of our own hearts, we should be much more consistent, and much more noble.

Selfishness is bad enough, under any circumstances; but to my mind, it is much worse in the young than in those of more mature years. The selfish man may owe his fault in part to the unkind treatment he has received. His generous affections may have been soured by a bitter experience of the world. Instead of friendly aid, he may have received only hard knocks, and even those who professed to love him, may have proved selfish and treacherous. For such

a man's selfishness we must feel some charity. But when this ugly trait appears full-blown in the young, no such excuse can be offered. It is, on the contrary, doubly hateful.

Look at Tom Greedy, the selfish boy. His motto is, "Take care of No. 1," and he sticks to it, every where and at all times. His conduct is a constant repetition of the old rhyme,

"Of all my father's family,
I love myself the best;
May I but be provided for,
I care not for the rest."

He acts as though he thought all the world was made for himself. His little I is larger than a thousand yours and theys. He is continually alarmed lest somebody should enjoy something that belongs to him. "Don't touch that — that's mine!" is his language, when you approach anything that he can possibly lay claim to. You need not try to borrow any of his books or playthings, for he does not lend them. Nobody ever knows any thing of the little delicacies that fortune occasionally drops into his cup, for they are always consumed in secret. If he is unwilling to share his good things with others, still less is he inclined to put himself out for the benefit of any one else. He is not the boy to yield even the most trifling point, for the sake of peace, or to prevent unhappiness; and as

to sacrificing his own comfort or feelings for the sake of other people, he will tell you he is not so great a fool as that, not he. Such is Tom Greedy; do any of you recognize the portrait?

Boys of the Tom Greedy order never have many friends. They may wonder why nobody likes them, but there is no mystery about it, except to themselves. We *cannot* love those in whom selfishness is a very conspicuous trait. God has so constituted us, that just in proportion as a man loves himself too well, he loses the love of others; and on the other hand, in proportion as he loves others, he is loved himself. Have any of you reason to suspect that you are not so generally and warmly loved by your associates as some other boys of your acquaintance? If so, may it not be that the fault is in yourself?

Selfishness is not only a very odious thing, in the sight of men, but it is a great sin, in the sight of God. One of the apostles says we ought not to please ourselves, but the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak. The Saviour, though he was rich, became poor for our sakes, thus exhibiting before the universe an example of generosity and benevolence, such probably as was never before witnessed. In his parable of the good Samaritan, he contrasts selfishness with generosity, and beautifully inculcates the duty of loving others as ourselves. Indeed, he tells us that the whole duty of man is embraced in these two things—

loving God with all the heart, and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Sir Walter Scott says that the race of mankind would perish, did they cease to aid each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head, till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the death-damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All, therefore, who need aid have a right to ask it of their fellow-mortals; and no one who holds the power of granting, can refuse it without guilt.

How beautiful, how noble, is a generous disposition! The man who has a great, unselfish heart, will never be much troubled with enemies. You cannot dislike him if you would. Enlarge your hearts, then, my young friends, until they shall embrace all who move within the circle of your acquaintance. Show a regard for others, and a host of warm friends will insensibly be drawn around you. Be generous, and you cannot but be beloved.

XLVIII.

KINDNESS.

SOMETIMES, my young readers, you meet with people whom you instinctively love at first sight. Perhaps it might not be easy to tell precisely why you like them ; but I suppose one reason is, that their pleasant countenances are faithful reflections of kind and good-natured hearts. If this spirit of kindness dwelt in every heart, what a happy world we should have ! How it would soften the trials and sweeten the bitterness of life !

“ Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love,” says the apostle Paul. Again he says, in another epistle, “ Be ye kind, one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” This is the spirit of the gospel, and the spirit of heaven itself. It is well worth striving after, and none of us are too young or too old to set about attaining it.

Many of you have brothers, or sisters, or both, and, probably you are sometimes tempted to treat them

unkindly. Perhaps you are older than they, and regard their wishes and happiness as of much less consequence than your own. This is wrong. It is not treating them kindly, and “with brotherly love;” and by persisting in this course, you will ultimately weaken, or entirely lose, their affection.

The boy who is uniformly kind to his brothers and sisters, and who regards their happiness as of no less importance than his own—he is the boy that is beloved in the family. Such a boy once died; and as his body lay in a darkened room, awaiting burial, his little sister stole up by his side, and taking his cold hand in hers, caressed it, and sobbed,

“Mother, this little hand never struck me!”

My young reader, could your brother or sister pay such a beautiful tribute to your memory, should you suddenly be cut down? Or should you be called to look upon their cold forms, for the last time, would no remembered act of unkindness reproach your aching heart, and add remorse to your grief? These are questions that you would do well to ponder, for there is no charmed key that can lock out death from your home.

Be kind, also, to your associates. Let the golden rule be your guide, and treat them as you wish to be treated. By a little effort, you may soon acquire a habit of speaking and acting kindly, if you have not already done so. You will thus make many, and

warm friends, and will add to your own happiness, not less than to theirs. A cross, selfish, unaccommodating and self-willed boy, is truly an object of pity. His presence is disagreeable to others, and he is a torment to himself. As he grows older, his countenance will settle into a permanent scowl, and he will at length become one of those sour and crabbed old men we sometimes see, who have a frown for everybody, and whose presence carries with itself a chill like that of an iceberg. How different from this is the sunny and joy-beaming face of the kind-hearted and good-natured boy !

It is comparatively easy to be kind to one's friends ; but the Bible requires us to go still farther than this, and to show kindness to our *enemies*. Its language is, " Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." Among the laws which God gave to the Israelites, through Moses, were the two following : — " If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." We must not rejoice over the misfortunes of an enemy, even though he hate us ; but, on the contrary, we are bound to treat him kindly, and to offer him our sympathy and assistance. It is a hard duty, in many

cases, but after all, there is no way in which we may so effectually "heap coals of fire" on the head of an enemy, as by treating him kindly.

Let me also urge you to be kind to the neglected and unfortunate. They can doubly appreciate your smiles and pleasant words, and your reward will be accordingly. Do not add to their unhappiness by your unkindness—it is the mark of a mean nature to do this. Kind words and looks are cheap, but who can tell how precious they are to the heart yearning for sympathy and love !

"A little word, in kindness spoken,
A motion, or a tear,
Has often healed the heart that's broken,
And made a friend sincere.

A word, a look, has crushed to earth
Full many a budding flower;
Which, had a smile but owned its birth,
Would bless the darkest hour.

Then deem it not an idle thing,
A pleasant word to speak;
The face you wear, the thoughts you bring,
A heart may heal or break."

How easy it is to do good ! Let us cherish these kindly feelings in our hearts, and we shall not live in vain, even though our lot be humble, and our life short.



XLIX.

COURAGE.

THIS, my young friends, is a trait much admired by boys. They like to read of deeds of bravery and heroism ; of soldiers who have covered themselves with glory on the field of battle, and of sailors who have done wonders upon the ocean. They wish, too, to be thought brave themselves ; and to have another boy double up his fist at them, and say, “ You’re a coward—you daresn’t fight,”—that is almost too much for boy-nature to endure.

Well, there is something generous and noble in this love of bravery ; and far be it from me to attempt to loosen the hold this sentiment has upon any of my readers. Only let me caution you that it is the *true article* you admire and imitate, and not a sham.

There are two kinds of courage—animal and moral. The first is the courage of nerve and muscle, and is often highly developed in brutes, as well as in men. The lion, the bull-dog, the game-cock, and

many other animals, excel men in this trait. The courage of the soldier, the prize-fighter, and the highway robber, is of this stamp. It is, of itself, a good and desirable quality, though frequently perverted to a bad end. We are often placed in circumstances where coolness, presence of mind, and physical courage, are very important. When called to face danger or death, or to suffer pain, we do not want to play the coward. But, after all, physical courage is generally a natural endowment, and its possession is no more a mark of real manhood, than is the possession of great strength, or a handsome figure.

Moral courage—the courage of the soul—is a very different quality. It is one of the highest and noblest traits of character within the reach of man. It is the courage which *dares to do right*, let the consequences be what they will. It may exist either with or without mere animal courage. In Daniel, and Paul, and Luther, we see both traits combined into a glorious heroism; but many a timid and shrinking woman has displayed a moral heroism as noble as theirs. It is a trait, too, which the youngest and obscurest may cultivate and exhibit. You, my reader, have displayed it, or its opposite, moral cowardice, in hundreds of instances. When that quarrelsome and swaggering boy, who is always ready for a fight, shook his clinched fist in your face, and dared you to combat, what did you do? Did you prove your physical

prowess, by returning 'blow for blow, and kick for kick? Or did you exhibit a nobler and rarer courage, by refusing to fight, on the ground that your parents had forbidden it?

I was once a boy, and I know how hard it is, in such a case, to preserve one's moral courage. It is easier to yield to the impulse of temper, and to rush into a pitched battle, even at the risk of getting a good drubbing, than it is to refuse to fight, on the ground that it is wrong. That boy is the real hero, who, under such circumstances, braves the sneers and taunts of his thoughtless companions, and dares to do right, even though he be laughed at for it. The charge of cowardice cannot long lie against such a boy. Even his accusers must in their hearts respect the firmness of his moral principle.

Many years ago, the foolish and wicked "code of honor," as dueling is politely termed, was in full force in England. If a gentleman had received an affront from another, a challenge was the inevitable consequence; and if the other party declined to fight, it followed as a matter of course that he was a coward, and no gentleman, and his name was covered with disgrace. Of course, there were few men of standing and honor who declined to fight. No matter how cowardly they really were, they were sure to accept the challenge; for though it required some courage to stand up and be shot at, it required a vast deal

more to refuse to comply with the bloody code. There were some choice spirits, however, who were brave enough to choose this latter alternative. Among them was Col. Gardiner, the pious British officer, who, when challenged to fight a duel, made this truly noble and Christian reply :

“I fear *sinning*, though you know, sir, I do not fear fighting.”

This was true courage — this was moral heroism. And this, my young friends, is the courage I would have you imitate. When a boy dares you to strike him, and taunts you with cowardice, that is *your* challenge to fight a duel ; and let me earnestly advise you, in such a case, to imitate Col. Gardiner's noble example, and say,

“No, I will not fight ; I am not afraid of you, but I am afraid of doing wrong.”

L.

THINK AGAIN.

“THINK again, John,” said a teacher to a boy who had answered a question in his lesson incorrectly ; “you know better than that — think again.” John did think again, and the true answer quickly came to his mind.

Have all of you, my young friends, acquired a habit of thoughtfulness ? Or are some of you always falling into mistakes and difficulties, and always excusing yourselves by saying, “I didn’t think ?” God has blessed you with reflecting powers. Do you use them to the best of your ability, or do you neglect them, and act and speak as though the power of thought were not yours ?

“Think again,”—you will often find yourself in situations when this will prove excellent advice. Sometimes you will be puzzled by a difficulty. It may be a hard question in your Sabbath school lesson, or a knotty problem in arithmetic, or a perplexing sentence in your parsing exercise, or an intricate

piece of work ; but before you give it up, and go to others for help, "think again," and perhaps the difficulty will vanish. The pleasure you will derive from conquering the difficulty, without the aid of others, will richly repay you for your trouble — to say nothing of the benefit you will derive from the process.

When you are tempted to speak in a hasty and inconsiderate manner, "think again." You may say, in a moment of passion, what you would give anything to unsay, in your cooler hours. But no word, however thoughtlessly spoken, can be recalled. As the Chinese express it, "An unlucky word dropped from the tongue, cannot be brought back by a coach and six horses." We must, then, "think before we speak," if we would not abuse this noble faculty.

"O many a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant!
And many a word, at random spoken,
May soothe or wound the heart that's broken!"

Before you attempt to revenge an injury, "think again." Do not put yourself on a level with the beast that has no rational powers, by blindly returning blow for blow, and scratch for scratch, and bite for bite. Think whether the injury you received might not have been unintentional ; or whether the

person who injured you is not vicious, or ignorant, or the victim of bad training and neglect; or whether you did not provoke him to anger. Think, also, whether any good could result from retaliating upon him. In the kingdom of Oude, in India, when the king signs the death-warrant of a criminal, and sends him to the executioner, no notice is taken of it. If he signs another order for his death, no attention is paid to that, either; and it is not until the third death-warrant is received, that the head of the doomed man is struck off. This custom was wisely adopted, to prevent the king from shedding blood without due reflection. It is an example worthy of our imitation, when we are tempted to punish an offence, or revenge an injury.

“Think again,” before you resolve to abandon any good work or purpose, or to neglect any known duty. Consider the consequences — weigh the reason for and against taking such a step; and do not plunge blindly into what may prove a very foolish and unfortunate blunder. Be not weary in well-doing, for in due time you shall reap, if you faint not.

“Think again,” when tempted to commit any sin, or to form any bad habit. If we would but observe this rule, the tempter’s power over us would be greatly reduced. It is because the young do not think, that they are so easily led astray. The hook is presented to them well-baited, and they seize it without

stopping to reflect what the consequences may be. But they are compelled to think, afterwards — and O, what sad thoughts do often visit them, when it is too late to be of any avail !

“I did not think,” — this is the scapegoat upon which the burden of half our faults and misfortunes is laid. But it is a poor excuse, and cannot shelter us from the consequences of our negligence. Indeed, I am not sure but that thoughtlessness aggravates the guilt we sometimes think it will justify. We *ought* to think, and therefore our very excuse needs to be excused.

A few months since, as one of the steamships which run between this country and Europe, was on her way across the ocean, she fell in with the wreck of a ship which had been disabled in a storm. Many of the passengers on board the wreck had died, and all were in momentary expectation of death, when relief thus providentially appeared. After the survivors had all been conveyed to the steamship, twenty corpses were left, lying upon the deck. As the captain of the sinking vessel was about leaving it for the last time, although the wreck seemed just ready to go down, he and an officer of the steamship who was with him, thought it best to take one more glance at the corpses, to satisfy themselves that no life remained in any of them.

“I really believe that woman breathes !” exclaimed

one of them, with a thrill of mingled horror and hope, pointing to the body of a female. On placing their ears to her mouth, they discovered that one whom they supposed to be dead was still breathing. They removed her on board the steamship, and a few minutes after, the ship was engulfed in the waters. The woman who thus narrowly escaped death, was taken to New York, and rapidly recovered. The thoughtfulness of those seamen, at a time when few would have taken thought for any but themselves, saved a human life. How richly were they rewarded for acting upon our motto, "Think again."

L I .

ONE STEP AT A TIME.

My young friends, did you never feel almost discouraged, as you have turned over the leaves of a new school-book, the study of which you were about to commence, and run your eye over the hard questions and unintelligible exercises in the latter part of the book? Perhaps it was an arithmetic, an algebra, or a grammar. The first lessons were easy enough, but the last seemed entirely beyond your comprehension, and you wondered how anybody could understand them. Yet, as you proceeded, step by step, through the book, beginning with the first lessons, the difficulties that appeared so alarming gradually disappeared, and you found that the last lessons were, after all, but little harder to understand than many of the earlier ones were, when you commenced. You easily mastered the book, by learning one lesson, or taking one step, at a time.

We are so constituted, that all the progress we make, in virtue as well as in knowledge, must be by

a gradual process. Nobody plunges from a high moral position into gross vice at a single bound ; and nobody can jump from the latter to the former with one effort. There is a German proverb which says,

“ Let the devil have hold of a hair, and he will get the whole head.”

He does, generally, commence with only a hair, so to speak ; but having made sure of that, he soon gets possession of the whole head. On the other hand, the path of the just man “ is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” A good character is not a thing to be matured in a day. It is the result of growth.

There is great encouragement for you, my young friends, in this law of nature. If you are sensible that you have fallen into any of the evil habits, or have neglected to cultivate any of the virtues, that I have held up before you in these pages, do not be disheartened because you cannot set the matter right by a single effort of the will. Many persons, when a fault or deficiency in their character is pointed out, make a few faint efforts to remedy the evil, and then become discouraged, and give up the struggle, because they cannot bring about the reform in a day. If the first blow does not disable the enemy, they give up the battle. I hope you will all try to avoid this great mistake. Aim as high as you please — and the higher the better ; but do not be discouraged if you fall short of the mark, in the first attempt.

A young man, who had just entered upon the service of Christ, had many fears that he should backslide ; and so troubled was he on this account, that he sometimes was almost tempted to pray that he might die young, and thus save religion from reproach, and his soul from ruin. But one day, while indulging these feelings, he says, "the impression was vividly made on my mind, that I must *serve God by the day*. That was more than thirty years ago," he adds, "and by the grace of God aiding me to put that rule into practice, I am yet on my way to heaven."

Here is a secret worth remembering. You all know that it is comparatively easy to behave well for a single day. The worst boy can do this. But what you can do to-day, you can also do to-morrow, if you try ; and if you can keep an evil habit in subjection two days, what is to prevent your doing so for a week, or a month, unless some extraordinary temptation assails you ? But you need think nothing of weeks or months—that might discourage you. Think only of the present time, and determine to do your duty *by the day*, and your effort will not be in vain.

Every step taken in the right path makes the succeeding step easier, inasmuch as it strengthens your determination and self-confidence, and helps form the habit of doing right. On the other hand, every step

of the boy who has entered upon a downward career, weakens his power of resisting temptations, and binds his evil habits upon him with a firmer grasp. See, then, that each step is right, and you cannot fail to reach your journey's end at last.

LII.

ONE THING MORE.

THE range of topics which I marked out for this volume, is exhausted, and the time has come for me to thank you, my young friends, for your attention to my counsels, and to bid you all a kind good-bye, for the present. The subjects to which I have called your attention, relate chiefly to the morals and manners of boyhood. I have pointed out dangers to be shunned ; bad habits to be avoided ; virtues to be cultivated ; and have tried to make you sensible of the golden opportunities which youth affords for laying the foundation of a pure and noble character. I hope some of you have been benefited by these hints, and will try to remember them, as you grow up.

But I cannot close without reminding you that there is something necessary to form a complete character, beyond what I have attempted to describe. You may attain to all these virtues, and shun all these vices, and yet, after all, be no better than the amiable young man in the Bible, to whom the Saviour

said, "One think thou lackest." Alas, that "one thing" is the most important of all, and yet how many are satisfied to live without it!

What should you think of a youth who was careful to discharge all the duties of life, with a single exception; who was exemplary in his conduct, affectionate in his disposition, and whose only fault was, that he neither loved nor tried to please his father,—a father who had made great sacrifices for him, and who loved him with all the strength of parental affection? You would consider him a very strange boy, and in spite of all his good traits, his one fault would lower him greatly in your esteem. And yet how many boys, who in other respects are promising and exemplary, treat, not their earthly parents, but their heavenly Father, precisely in this way. They do their duty to everybody else, and utterly neglect Him to whom they are indebted for every blessing they have ever enjoyed.

Remember, my young friends, that however spotless your character may be in other respects, without love to God, you cannot live as you should live, nor can you meet death with peace. The most scrupulous attendance to the lesser duties of life, cannot excuse you from those weightier responsibilities, upon which your eternal destiny depends. On the contrary, your virtues will only aggravate your condemnation, if you remain at enmity with your Maker.

I must also add, that without this "one thing more," you cannot be really happy; for religion is true happiness. I do not mean to say that the Christian is never unhappy. He has his sorrows, and trials, and disappointments, like other men; but for all that, he enjoys more true happiness than the worldly experience, under the same outward circumstances. Religion's ways "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

A poor man, who was obliged to work very hard to support his family, one day found a bag containing a large amount of gold. It was in an unfrequented road, and nobody saw him pick up the treasure, neither could he imagine to whom it belonged. At first he did not know what to do with it, but at length he concluded that he would carry it home, and keep his good luck a secret. He did so, and no one appearing to claim the gold, he soon began to spend it as his necessity required. He was very sly, however, in all his movements, for he did not feel quite at ease in regard to the money, not knowing but that he might yet be called to account for it.

There was another poor man in the same town, who came into possession of a similar bag of gold, at about the same time. But he did not pick up his treasure in the highway; on the contrary, it was left at his door, with a letter, signed by a rich and benevolent friend, who lived in the neighborhood. In this letter, the writer said,

“I have known you long, and have witnessed the faithfulness with which you have labored to support yourself and children. I have taken a deep interest in your struggles, and in the welfare of your family; and now, as a slight token of my friendship, I want you to accept of this gold, and use it in such a way as will promote the comfort of yourself and household.”

Which of these two poor men, think you, derived the greatest enjoyment from his gold? “The last,” you will answer at once. But do you know who these two poor men are? The first is the worldly man, who is prospered “in his basket and his store,” and becomes rich, but does not know that God bestows it all. He takes all the credit to himself, and perhaps he attributes his wealth to good luck. The other man is the representative of the Christian in prosperity, who does not *pick up* his good things at hap-hazard, but receives them direct from his Father in heaven. How does it increase their value, to know that they are all tokens of the mercy and loving-kindness of the bountiful Giver! Each dollar is the more precious, because stamped with the love of God. Each enjoyment is the more delicious, because of the hand that bestows it. The delightful emotion of gratitude, of which the worldly man knows nothing, adds immeasurably to the happiness of the Christian; and thus, with precisely the same blessings as the

other, he is, other things being equal, far the happier man. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."

In trial, and suffering, and destitution, the difference between the Christian and the worldly-minded is still more remarkable. "I will be with him in trouble," is the gracious promise of God to the believer; and when every other source of happiness is dried up, this fountain of living joy is opened in the Christian's heart.

And yet I have known young people, who entertained the notion that religion is a *gloomy* thing! Religion gloomy! No, it is the brightest and loveliest thing in this fallen world. When our hearts are properly under its influence, it adds a new charm to every blessing, it extracts the sting from every sorrow. No, my young friends, there is nothing gloomy but sin and its consequences.

An ancient writer has recorded, that in the early worship of Jupiter, the officiating priest was always a boy, whose office terminated when his beard began to grow. Would that all our boys were priests, not of Jupiter, but of that Being of whom the Roman divinity was but a faint shadow and a base counterfeit. This, my youthful readers, is the service to which God himself has called you. You are old enough to enter upon it, and by his Word, and the mouth of his appointed messengers, he is daily and weekly calling

you to the work, as he called the child Samuel in the silent night watches. Will you not promptly answer, in the words of that dear boy,

“Speak, for thy servant heareth.”

How beautiful is the sight of a youth offering his heart to God before the world has blunted its sensibilities, or the rank weeds of sin have overrun it, and well nigh smothered every good thing. If one offering from weak and sinful hands can be more acceptable to God than another, surely it must be that of the young heart, with the dew of its youth still fresh and pure upon it. Will you not resolve at once to bring this tribute to your heavenly Father, while it is yet in your power to do so? May each of you decide wisely in this matter, and so realize the fulfilment of the promise, “Those that seek me early shall find me.”





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